

THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

VOL. XI.

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THE
CORNHILL
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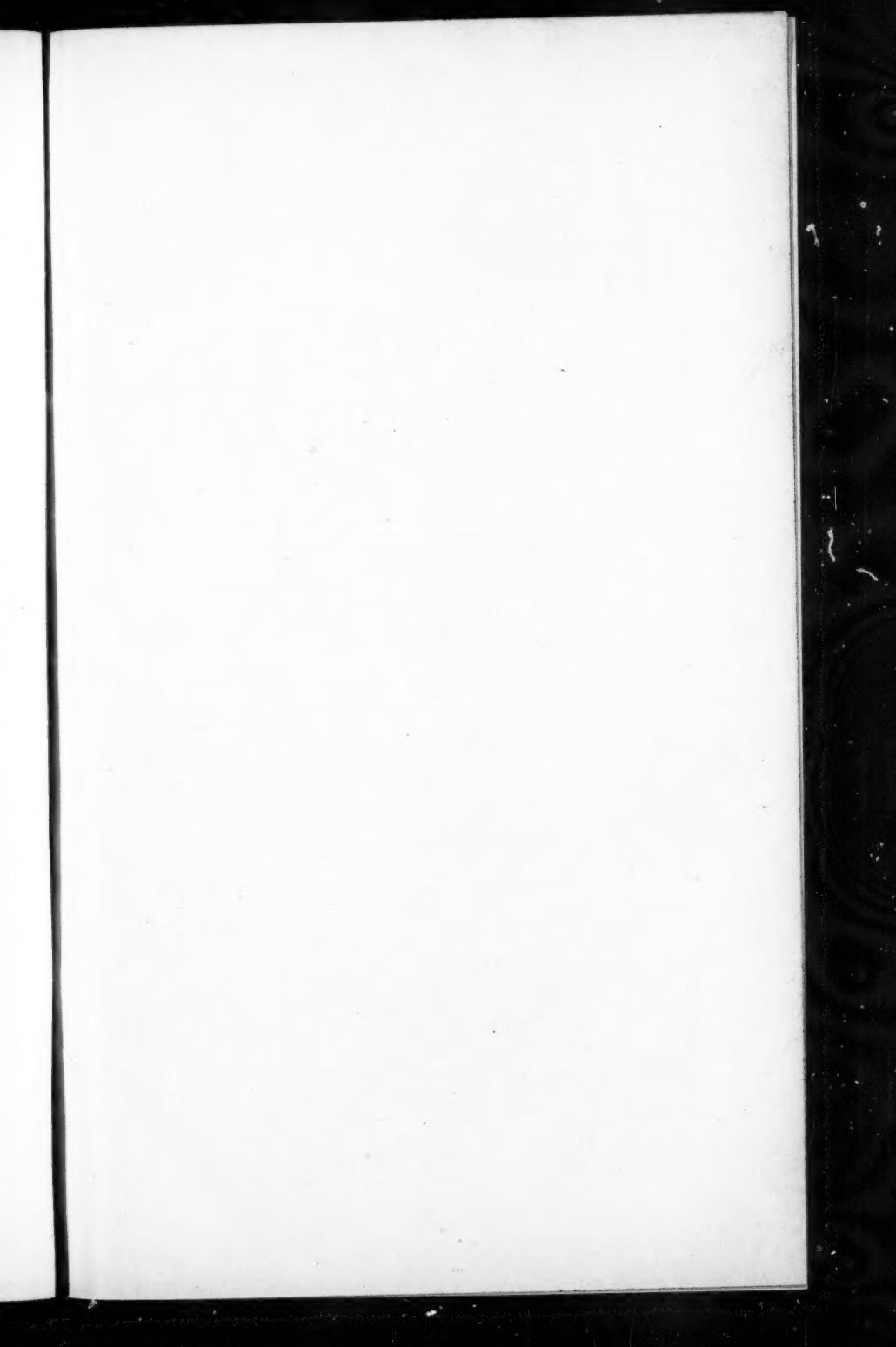
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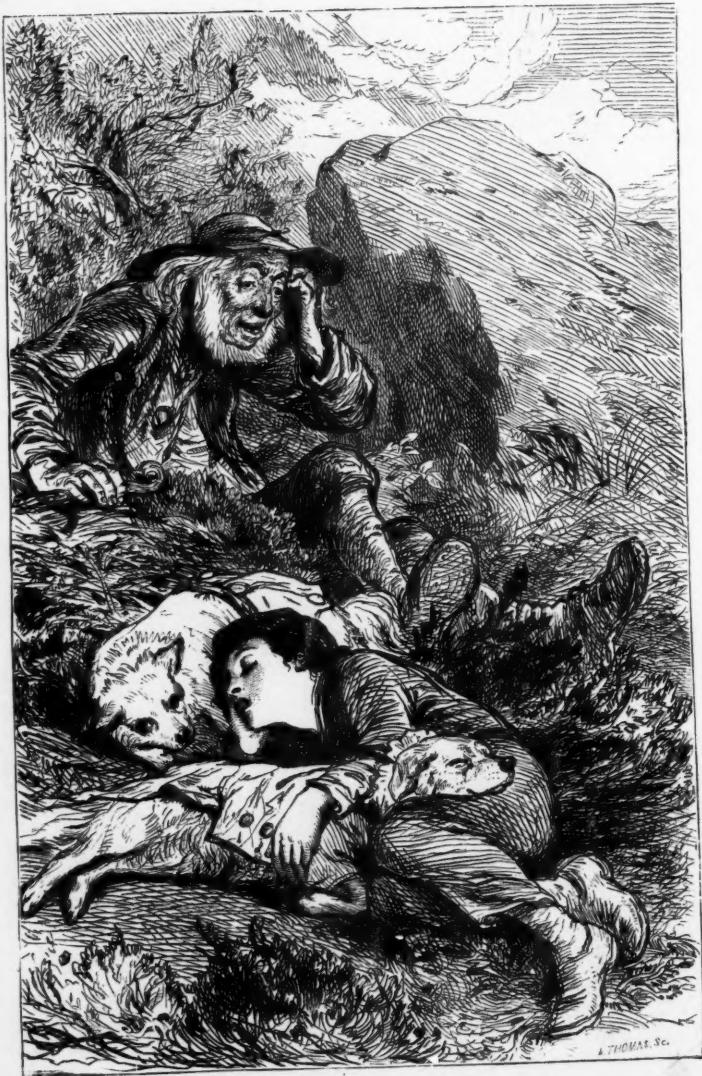
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MY BROTHERS, THE DOGS.

THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

JANUARY, 1865.

Armadale.

BOOK THE SECOND.

CHAPTER II.

THE MAN REVEALED.



HE first cool breathings of the coming dawn fluttered through the open window as Mr. Brock read the closing lines of the Confession. He put it from him in silence, without looking up. The first shock of discovery had struck his mind, and had passed away again. At his age, and with his habits of thought, his grasp was not strong enough to hold the whole revelation that had fallen on him. All his heart, when he closed the manuscript, was with the memory of the woman who had been the beloved friend of his later and happier life; all his thoughts were busy with the miserable secret of her treason to her own father which the letter had disclosed.

He was startled out of the narrow limits of his own little grief by the vibration of the table at which he sat, under a hand that was laid on it

heavily. The instinct of reluctance was strong in him; but he conquered it, and looked up. There, silently confronting him in the mixed light of the yellow candle-flame and the faint grey dawn, stood the castaway of the village inn—the inheritor of the fatal Armadale name.

Mr. Brock shuddered as the terror of the present time, and the darker terror yet of the future that might be coming, rushed back on him at the sight of the man's face. The man saw it, and spoke first.

"Is my father's crime looking at you out of *my eyes*?" he asked.
"Has the ghost of the drowned man followed me into the room?"

The suffering and the passion that he was forcing back, shook the hand that he still kept on the table, and stifled the voice in which he spoke until it sank to a whisper.

"I have no wish to treat you otherwise than justly and kindly," answered Mr. Brock. "Do me justice on my side, and believe that I am incapable of cruelly holding you responsible for your father's crime."

The reply seemed to compose him. He bowed his head in silence, and took up the confession from the table.

"Have you read this through?" he asked quietly.

"Every word of it, from first to last."

"Have I dealt openly with you so far? Has Ozias Midwinter——"

"Do you still call yourself by that name," interrupted Mr. Brock, "now your true name is known to me?"

"Since I have read my father's confession," was the answer, "I like my ugly alias better than ever. Allow me to repeat the question which I was about to put to you a minute since—Has Ozias Midwinter done his best, thus far, to enlighten Mr. Brock?"

The rector evaded a direct reply. "Few men in your position," he said, "would have had the courage to show me that letter."

"Don't be too sure, sir, of the vagabond you picked up at the inn till you know a little more of him than you know now. You have got the secret of my birth, but you are not in possession yet of the story of my life. You ought to know it, and you shall know it, before you leave me alone with Mr. Armadale. Will you wait, and rest a little while? or shall I tell it you now?"

"Now," said Mr. Brock, still as far away as ever from knowing the real character of the man before him.

Everything Ozias Midwinter said, everything Ozias Midwinter did, was against him. He had spoken with a sardonic indifference, almost with an insolence of tone, which would have repelled the sympathies of any man who heard him. And now, instead of placing himself at the table, and addressing his story directly to the rector, he withdrew silently and ungraciously to the window-seat. There he sat—his face averted; his hands mechanically turning the leaves of his father's letter till he came to the last. With his eyes fixed on the closing lines of the manuscript, and with a strange mixture of recklessness

and sadness in his voice, he began his promised narrative in these words :—

"The first thing you know of me," he said, "is what my father's confession has told you already. He mentions here that I was a child, asleep on his breast, when he spoke his last words in this world, and when a stranger's hand wrote them down for him at his death-bed. That stranger's name, as you may have noticed, is signed on the cover—'Alexander Neal, Writer to the Signet, Edinburgh.' The first recollection I have is of Alexander Neal beating me with a horsewhip (I daresay I deserved it), in the character of my stepfather."

"Have you no recollection of your mother at the same time?" asked Mr. Brock.

"Yes; I remember her having shabby old clothes made up to fit me, and having fine new frocks bought for her two children by her second husband. I remember the servants laughing at me in my old things, and the horsewhip finding its way to my shoulders again, for losing my temper and tearing my shabby clothes. My next recollection gets on to a year or two later. I remember myself locked up in a lumber-room, with a bit of bread and a mug of water, wondering what it was that made my mother and my stepfather seem to hate the very sight of me. I never settled that question till yesterday, and then I solved the mystery, when my father's letter was put into my hands. My mother knew what had really happened on board the French timber-ship, and my step-father knew what had really happened, and they were both well aware that the shameful secret which they would fain have kept from every living creature, was a secret which would be one day revealed to *me*. There was no help for it—the confess was in the executor's hands, and there was I, an ill-conditioned b'at, with my mother's negro blood in my face, and my murdering father's passions in my heart, inheritor of their secret in spite of them! I don't wonder at the horsewhip now, or the shabby old clothes, or the bread and water in the lumber-room. Natural penalties all of them, sir, which the child was beginning to pay already for the father's sin."

Mr. Brock looked at the swarthy, secret face, still obstinately turned away from him. "Is this the stark insensibility of a vagabond?" he asked himself, "or the despair in disguise of a miserable man?"

"School is my next recollection," the other went on. "A cheap place in a lost corner of Scotland. I was left there, with a bad character to help me at starting. I spare you the story of the master's cane in the school-room, and the boys' kicks in the playground. I daresay there was ingrained ingratitude in my nature; at any rate, I ran away. The first person who met me asked my name. I was too young and too foolish to know the importance of concealing it, and, as a matter of course, I was taken back to school the same evening. The result taught me a lesson which I have not forgotten since. In a day or two more, like the vag-

bond I was, I ran away for the second time. The school watch-dog had had his instructions, I suppose : he stopped me before I got outside the gate. Here is his mark, among the rest, on the back of my hand. His master's marks I can't show you—they are all on my back. Can you believe in my perversity ? There was a devil in me that no dog could worry out ; I ran away again as soon as I left my bed ; and this time I got off. At nightfall I found myself (with a pocketful of the school oatmeal) lost on a moor. I lay down on the fine soft heather, under the lee of a great grey rock. Do you think I felt lonely ? Not I ! I was away from the master's cane, away from my schoolfellows' kicks, away from my mother, away from my stepfather ; and I lay down that night under my good friend the rock, the happiest boy in all Scotland ! ”

Through the wretched childhood which that one significant circumstance disclosed, Mr. Brock began to see dimly how little was really strange, how little really unaccountable, in the character of the man who was now speaking to him.

“ I slept soundly,” Midwinter continued, “ under my friend the rock. When I woke in the morning, I found a sturdy old man with a fiddle, sitting on one side of me, and two dancing dogs in scarlet jackets on the other. Experience had made me too sharp to tell the truth, when the man put his first questions. He didn't press them—he gave me a good breakfast out of his knapsack, and he let me romp with the dogs. ‘ I'll tell you what,’ he said, when he had got my confidence in this manner, ‘ you want three things, my man; you want a new father, a new family, and a new name. I'll be your father ; I'll let you have the dogs for your brothers ; and if you'll promise to be very careful of it, I'll give you my own name into the bargain. Ozias Midwinter, junior, you have had a good breakfast—if you want a good dinner, come along with me ! ’ He got up ; the dogs trotted after him, and I trotted after the dogs. Who was my new father ? you will ask. A half-bred gipsy, sir ; a drunkard, a ruffian, and a thief—and the best friend I ever had ! Isn't a man your friend who gives you your food, your shelter, and your education ? Ozias Midwinter taught me to dance the Highland sling ; to throw somersaults ; to walk on stilts ; and to sing songs to his fiddle. Sometimes we roamed the country, and performed at fairs. Sometimes we tried the large towns, and enlivened bad company over its cups. I was a nice lively little boy of eleven years old—and bad company, the women especially, took a fancy to me and my nimble feet. I was vagabond enough to like the life. The dogs and I lived together, ate and drank, and slept together. I can't think of those poor little four-footed brothers of mine, even now, without a choking in the throat. Many is the beating we three took together ; many is the hard day's dancing we did together ; many is the night we have slept together, and whimpered together, on the cold hill-side. I'm not trying to distress you, sir ; I'm only telling you the truth. The life with all its hardships was a life that fitted me, and the half-bred gipsy who gave me his name, ruffian as he was, was a ruffian I liked.”

"A man who beat you!" exclaimed Mr. Brock, in astonishment.

"Didn't I tell you just now, sir, that I lived with the dogs? and did you ever hear of a dog who liked his master the worse for beating him? Hundreds of thousands of miserable men, women, and children would have liked that man (as I liked him) if he had always given them what he always gave me—plenty to eat. It was stolen food mostly, and my new gipsy father was generous with it. He seldom laid the stick on us when he was sober; but it diverted him to hear us yelp when he was drunk. He died drunk, and enjoyed his favourite amusement with his last breath. One day (when I had been two years in his service), after giving us a good dinner out on the moor, he sat down with his back against a stone, and called us up to divert himself with his stick. He made the dogs yelp first, and then he called to me. I didn't go very willingly—he had been drinking harder than usual, and the more he drank the better he liked his after-dinner amusement. He was in high good-humour that day, and he hit me so hard that he toppled over, in his drunken state, with the force of his own blow. He fell with his face in a puddle, and lay there without moving. I and the dogs stood at a distance, and looked at him: we thought he was feigning, to get us near and have another stroke at us. He feigned so long that we ventured up to him at last. It took me some time to pull him over—he was a heavy man. When I did get him on his back, he was dead. We made all the outcry we could; but the dogs were little, and I was little, and the place was lonely; and no help came to us. I took his fiddle, and his stick; I said to my two brothers, 'Come along, we must get our own living now;' and we went away heavy-hearted, and left him on the moor. Unnatural as it may seem to you, I was sorry for him. I kept his ugly name through all my after-wanderings, and I have enough of the old leaven left in me to like the sound of it still. Midwinter or Armadale, never mind my name now—we will talk of that afterwards; you must know the worst of me first."

"Why not the best of you?" said Mr. Brock, gently.

"Thank you, sir,—but I am here to tell the truth. We will get on, if you please, to the next chapter in my story. The dogs and I did badly, after our master's death—our luck was against us. I lost one of my little brothers—the best performer of the two; he was stolen, and I never recovered him. My fiddle and my stilts were taken from me next, by main force, by a tramp who was stronger than I. These misfortunes drew Tommy and me—I beg your pardon, sir, I mean the dog—closer together than ever. I think we had some kind of dim foreboding on both sides, that we had not done with our misfortunes yet; anyhow, it was not very long before we were parted for ever. We were neither of us thieves (our master had been satisfied with teaching us to dance); but we both committed an invasion of the rights of property, for all that. Young creatures, even when they are half-starved, cannot resist taking a run sometimes, on a fine morning. Tommy and I could not resist taking

a run into a gentleman's plantation ; the gentleman preserved his game ; and the gentleman's keeper knew his business. I heard a gun go off—you can guess the rest. God preserve me from ever feeling such misery again, as I felt when I lay down by Tommy, and took him, dead and bloody, in my arms ! The keeper attempted to part us—I bit him, like the wild animal I was. He tried the stick on me next—he might as well have tried it on one of the trees. The noise reached the ears of two young ladies, riding near the place—daughters of the gentleman on whose property I was a trespasser. They were too well brought up to lift their voices against the sacred right of preserving game, but they were kind-hearted girls, and they pitied me, and took me home with them. I remember the gentlemen of the house (keen sportsmen all of them) roaring with laughter as I went by the windows, crying, with my little dead dog in my arms. Don't suppose I complain of their laughter ; it did me good service—it roused the indignation of the two ladies. One of them took me into her own garden, and showed me a place where I might bury my dog under the flowers, and be sure that no other hands should ever disturb him again. The other went to her father, and persuaded him to give the forlorn little vagabond a chance in the house, under one of the upper servants. Yes ! you have been cruising in company with a man who was once a footboy. I saw you look at me, when I amused Mr. Armadale by laying the cloth on board the yacht. Now you know why I laid it so neatly, and forgot nothing. It has been my good fortune to see something of Society ; I have helped to fill its stomach and black its boots. My experience of the servants' hall was not a long one. Before I had worn out my first suit of livery, there was a scandal in the house. It was the old story ; there is no need to tell it over again for the thousandth time. Loose money left on a table, and not found there again ; all the servants with characters to appeal to except the footboy, who had been rashly taken on trial. Well ! well ! I was lucky in that house to the last ; I was not prosecuted for taking what I had not only never touched, but never even seen—I was only turned out. One morning, I went in my old clothes to the grave where I had buried Tommy. I gave the place a kiss ; I said good-by to my little dead dog ; and there I was, out in the world again, at the ripe age of thirteen years ! ”

“ In that friendless state, and at that tender age,” said Mr. Brock, “ did no thought cross your mind of going home again ? ”

“ I went home again, sir, that very night—I slept on the hill-side. What other home had I ? In a day or two's time, I drifted back to the large towns and the bad company,—the great open country was so lonely to me, now I had lost the dogs ! Two sailors picked me up next ; I was a handy lad, and I got a cabin-boy's berth on board a coasting-vessel. A cabin-boy's berth means dirt to live in, offal to eat, a man's work on a boy's shoulders, and the rope's-end at regular intervals. The vessel touched at a port in the Hebrides. I was as ungrateful as usual to my best benefactors—I ran away again. Some women found me, half-dead

of starvation, in the northern wilds of the Isle of Skye. It was near the coast, and I took a turn with the fishermen next. There was less of the rope's-end among my new masters; but plenty of exposure to wind and weather, and hard work enough to have killed a boy who was not a seasoned tramp like me. I fought through it till the winter came, and then the fishermen turned me adrift again. I don't blame them—food was scarce, and mouths were many. With famine staring the whole community in the face, why should they keep a boy who didn't belong to them? A great city was my only chance in the winter time; so I went to Glasgow, and all but stepped into the lion's mouth as soon as I got there. I was minding an empty cart on the Broomielaw, when I heard my stepfather's voice on the pavement-side of the horse by which I was standing. He had met some person whom he knew, and, to my terror and surprise, they were talking about me. Hidden behind the horse, I heard enough of their conversation to know that I had narrowly escaped discovery before I went on board the coasting-vessel. I had met, at that time, with another vagabond boy, of my own age; we had quarrelled and parted. The day after, my stepfather's inquiries were made in that very district; and it became a question with him (a good personal description being unattainable in either case) which of the two boys he should follow. One of them, he was informed, was known as "Brown," and the other as "Midwinter." Brown was just the common name which a cunning runaway boy would be most likely to assume; Midwinter, just the remarkable name which he would be most likely to avoid. The pursuit had accordingly followed Brown, and had allowed me to escape. I leave you to imagine whether I was not doubly and trebly determined to keep my gipsy master's name after that. But my resolution did not stop here. I made up my mind to leave the country altogether. After a day or two's lurking about the outward-bound vessels in port, I found out which sailed first, and hid myself on board. Hunger tried hard to force me out before the pilot had left; but hunger was not new to me, and I kept my place. The pilot was out of the vessel when I made my appearance on deck, and there was nothing for it but to keep me or throw me overboard. The captain said (I have no doubt quite truly) that he would have preferred throwing me overboard; but the majesty of the law does sometimes stand the friend even of a vagabond like me. In that way I came back to a sea life. In that way, I learnt enough to make me handy and useful (as I saw you noticed) on board Mr. Armadale's yacht. I sailed more than one voyage, in more than one vessel, to more than one part of the world; and I might have followed the sea for life, if I could only have kept my temper under every provocation that could be laid on it. I had learnt a great deal—but, not having learnt that, I made the last part of my last voyage home to the port of Bristol in irons; and I saw the inside of a prison for the first time in my life, on a charge of mutinous conduct to one of my officers. You have heard me with extraordinary patience, sir, and I am glad to tell you, in return, that we are not far now from the end of my

story. You found some books, if I remember right, when you searched my luggage at the Somersetshire inn?"

Mr. Brock answered in the affirmative.

"Those books mark the next change in my life—and the last, before I took the usher's place at the school. My term of imprisonment was not a long one. Perhaps my youth pleaded for me; perhaps the Bristol magistrates took into consideration the time I had passed in irons on board ship. Anyhow, I was just turned seventeen, when I found myself out on the world again. I had no friends to receive me; I had no place to go to. A sailor's life, after what had happened, was a life I recoiled from in disgust. I stood in the crowd on the bridge at Bristol, wondering what I should do with my freedom now I had got it back. Whether I had altered in the prison, or whether I was feeling the change in character that comes with coming manhood, I don't know; but the old reckless enjoyment of the old vagabond life seemed quite worn out of my nature. An awful sense of loneliness kept me wandering about Bristol, in horror of the quiet country, till after nightfall. I looked at the lights kindling in the parlour windows, with a miserable envy of the happy people inside. A word of advice would have been worth something to me at that time. Well! I got it: a policeman advised me to move on. He was quite right—what else could I do? I looked up at the sky, and there was my old friend of many a night's watch at sea, the north star. 'All points of the compass are alike to me,' I thought to myself; 'I'll go *your way*.' Not even the star would keep me company that night. It got behind a cloud, and left me alone in the rain and darkness. I groped my way to a cart-shed, fell asleep, and dreamed of old times, when I served my gipsy master and lived with the dogs. God! what I would have given when I woke to have felt Tommy's little cold muzzle in my hand! Why am I dwelling on these things? why don't I get on to the end? You shouldn't encourage me, sir, by listening so patiently. After a week more of wandering, without hope to help me, or prospects to look to, I found myself in the streets of Shrewsbury, staring in at the windows of a bookseller's shop. An old man came to the shop-door, looked about him, and saw me. 'Do you want a job?' he asked. 'And are you not above doing it cheap?' The prospect of having something to do, and some human creature to speak a word to, tempted me, and I did a day's dirty work in the bookseller's warehouse, for a shilling. More work followed at the same rate. In a week, I was promoted to sweep out the shop, and put up the shutters. In no very long time after, I was trusted to carry the books out; and when quarter-day came, and the shopman left, I took his place. Wonderful luck! you will say; here I had found my way to a friend at last. I had found my way to one of the most merciless misers in England; and I had risen in the little world of Shrewsbury by the purely commercial process of underselling all my competitors. The job in the warehouse had been declined at the price by every idle man in the town—and I did it. The regular porter received his weekly pittance

under weekly protest.—I took two shillings less, and made no complaint. The shopman gave warning on the ground that he was underfed as well as underpaid. I received half his salary, and lived contentedly on his reversionary scraps. Never were two men so well suited to each other as that bookseller and I! *His* one object in life was to find somebody who would work for him at starvation wages. *My* one object in life was to find somebody who would give me an asylum over my head. Without a single sympathy in common—without a vestige of feeling of any sort, hostile or friendly, growing up between us on either side—without wishing each other good-night, when we parted on the house stairs, or good-morning when we met at the shop counter—we lived alone in that house, strangers from first to last, for two whole years. A dismal existence for a lad of my age, was it not? You are a clergyman and a scholar—surely you can guess what made the life endurable to me?"

Mr. Brock remembered the well-worn volumes which had been found in the usher's bag. "The books made it endurable to you," he said.

The eyes of the castaway kindled with a new light.

"Yes!" he said, "the books—the generous friends who met me without suspicion—the merciful masters who never used me ill! The only years of my life that I can look back on with something like pride, are the years I passed in the miser's house. The only unalloyed pleasure I have ever tasted, is the pleasure that I found for myself on the miser's shelves. Early and late, through the long winter nights and the quiet summer days, I drank at the fountain of knowledge, and never wearied of the draught. There were few customers to serve—for the books were mostly of the solid and scholarly kind. No responsibilities rested on me—for the accounts were kept by my master, and only the small sums of money were suffered to pass through my hands. He soon found out enough of me to know that my honesty was to be trusted, and that my patience might be counted on, treat me as he might. The one insight into *his* character which I obtained, on my side, widened the distance between us to its last limits. He was a confirmed opium-eater in secret—a prodigal in laudanum, though a miser in all besides. He never confessed his frailty, and I never told him I had found it out. He had his pleasure apart from *me*; and I had my pleasure apart from *him*. Week after week, month after month, there we sat without a friendly word ever passing between us—I, alone with my book at the counter: he, alone with his ledger in the parlour, dimly visible to me through the dirty window-pane of the glass door, sometimes poring over his figures, sometimes lost and motionless for hours in the ecstasy of his opium trance. Time passed, and made no impression on us; the seasons of two years came and went, and found us still unchanged. One morning, at the opening of the third year, my master did not appear as usual to give me my allowance for breakfast. I went upstairs, and found him helpless in his bed. He refused to trust me with the keys of the cupboard, or to let

me send for a doctor. I bought a morsel of bread, and went back to my books—with no more feeling for him (I honestly confess it), than he would have had for me under the same circumstances. An hour or two later, I was roused from my reading by an occasional customer of ours, a retired medical man. He went upstairs. I was glad to get rid of him, and return to my books. He came down again, and disturbed me once more. ‘I don’t much like you, my lad,’ he said; ‘but I think it my duty to say that you will soon have to shift for yourself. You are no great favourite in the town, and you may have some difficulty in finding a new place. Provide yourself with a written character from your master before it is too late.’ He spoke to me coldly. I thanked him coldly on my side, and got my character the same day. Do you think my master let me have it for nothing? Not he! He bargained with me on his death-bed. I was his creditor for a month’s salary, and he wouldn’t write a line of my testimonial until I had first promised to forgive him the debt. Three days afterwards, he died, enjoying to the last the happiness of having over-reached his shopman. ‘Aha!’ he whispered, when the doctor formally summoned me to take leave of him, ‘I got you cheap!—Was Ozias Midwinter’s stick as cruel as that? I think not. Well! there I was, out on the world again, but surely with better prospects, this time. I had taught myself to read Latin, Greek, and German; and I had got my written character to speak for me. All useless! The doctor was quite right; I was not liked in the town. The lower order of the people despised me for selling my services to the miser, at the miser’s price. As for the better classes, I did with them (God knows how!) what I have always done with everybody, except Mr. Armadale—I produced a disagreeable impression at first sight; I couldn’t mend it afterwards; and there was an end of me in respectable quarters. It is quite likely I might have spent all my savings, my puny little golden offspring of two years’ miserable growth, but for a school advertisement which I saw in a local paper. The heartlessly mean terms that were offered, encouraged me to apply; and I got the place. How I prospered in it, and what became of me next, there is no need to tell you. The thread of my story is all wound off; my vagabond life stands stripped of its mystery; and you know the worst of me at last.’

A moment of silence followed those closing words. Midwinter rose from the window-seat, and came back to the table with the letter from Wilkbad in his hand.

“ My father’s confession has told you who I am; and my own confession has told you what my life has been,” he said, addressing Mr. Brock, without taking the chair to which the rector pointed. “ I promised to make a clean breast of it when I first asked leave to enter this room. Have I kept my word?”

“ It is impossible to doubt it,” replied Mr. Brock. “ You have established your claim on my confidence and my sympathy. I should be

insensible indeed if I could know what I now know of your childhood and your youth, and not feel something of Allan's kindness for Allan's friend."

"Thank you, sir," said Midwinter, simply and gravely.

He sat down opposite Mr. Brock at the table for the first time.

"In a few hours you will have left this place," he proceeded. "If I can help you to leave it with your mind at ease, I will. There is more to be said between us than we have said up to this time. My future relations with Mr. Armadale are still left undecided; and the serious question raised by my father's letter is a question which we have neither of us faced yet."

He paused and looked with a momentary impatience at the candle still burning on the table, in the morning light. The struggle to speak with composure, and to keep his own feelings stoically out of view, was evidently growing harder and harder to him.

"It may possibly help your decision," he went on, "if I tell you how I determined to act towards Mr. Armadale—in the matter of the similarity of our names—when I first read this letter, and when I had composed myself sufficiently to be able to think at all." He stopped, and cast a second impatient look at the lighted candle. "Will you excuse the odd fancy of an odd man?" he asked, with a faint smile. "I want to put out the candle—I want to speak of the new subject, in the new light."

He extinguished the candle as he spoke, and let the first tenderness of the daylight flow uninterruptedly into the room.

"I must once more ask your patience," he resumed, "if I return for a moment to myself and my circumstances. I have already told you that my stepfather made an attempt to discover me some years after I had turned my back on the Scotch school. He took that step out of no anxiety of his own, but simply as the agent of my father's trustees. In the exercise of their discretion, they had sold the estates in Barbadoes (at the time of the emancipation of the slaves, and the ruin of West Indian property) for what the estates would fetch. Having invested the proceeds they were bound to set aside a sum for my yearly education. This responsibility obliged them to make the attempt to trace me—a fruitless attempt, as you already know. A little later (as I have been since informed) I was publicly addressed by an advertisement in the newspapers—which I never saw. Later still, when I was twenty-one, a second advertisement appeared (which I did see) offering a reward for evidence of my death. If I was alive, I had a right to my half share of the proceeds of the estates, on coming of age; if dead, the money reverted to my mother. I went to the lawyers, and heard from them what I have just told you. After some difficulty in proving my identity—and, after an interview with my stepfather, and a message from my mother, which has hopelessly widened the old breach between us—my claim was allowed; and my money is now invested for me in the funds, under the name that is really my own."

Mr. Brock drew eagerly nearer to the table. He saw the end now, to which the speaker was tending.

"Twice a year," Midwinter pursued, "I must sign my own name to get my own income. At all other times, and under all other circumstances, I may hide my identity under any name I please. As Ozias Midwinter, Mr. Armadale first knew me—as Ozias Midwinter he shall know me to the end of my days. Whatever may be the result of this interview—whether I win your confidence, or whether I lose it—of one thing you may feel sure. Your pupil shall never know the horrible secret which I have trusted to your keeping. This is no extraordinary resolution—for, as you know already, it costs me no sacrifice of feeling to keep my assumed name. There is nothing in my conduct to praise—it comes naturally out of the gratitude of a thankful man. Review the circumstances for yourself, sir; and set my own horror of revealing them to Mr. Armadale out of the question. If the story of the names is ever told, there can be no limiting it to the disclosure of my father's crime; it must go back to the story of Mrs. Armadale's marriage. I have heard her son talk of her; I know how he loves her memory. As God is my witness, he shall never love it less dearly through me!"

Simply as the words were spoken, they touched the deepest sympathies in the rector's nature: they took his thoughts back to Mrs. Armadale's death-bed. There sat the man against whom she had ignorantly warned him, in her son's interests—and that man, of his own free-will, had laid on himself the obligation of respecting her secret for her son's sake! The memory of his own past efforts to destroy the very friendship out of which this resolution had sprung, rose, and reproached Mr. Brock. He held out his hand to Midwinter for the first time. "In her name, and in her son's name," he said warmly, "I thank you."

Without replying, Midwinter spread the confession open before him on the table.

"I think I have said all that it was my duty to say," he began, "before we could approach the consideration of this letter. Whatever may have appeared strange in my conduct towards you and towards Mr. Armadale, may be now trusted to explain itself. You can easily imagine the natural curiosity and surprise that I must have felt (ignorant as I then was of the truth) when the sound of Mr. Armadale's name first startled me as the echo of my own. You will readily understand that I only hesitated to tell him I was his namesake, because I hesitated to damage my position—in your estimation, if not in his—by confessing that I had come among you under an assumed name. And, after all that you have just heard of my vagabond life and my low associates, you will hardly wonder at the obstinate silence I maintained about myself, at a time when I did not feel the sense of responsibility which my father's confession has laid on me. We can return to these small personal explanations, if you wish it, at another time; they cannot be suffered to keep us from the greater interests which we must settle before you leave this

place. We may come now——” his voice faltered; and he suddenly turned his face towards the window, so as to hide it from the rector’s view. “We may come now,” he repeated, his hand trembling visibly as it held the page, “to the murder on board the timber-ship, and to the warning that has followed me from my father’s grave.”

Softly—as if he feared they might reach Allan, sleeping in the neighbouring room—he read the last terrible words which the Scotchman’s pen had written at Wildbad, as they fell from his father’s lips.

“Avoid the widow of the man I killed—if the widow still lives. Avoid the maid whose wicked hand smoothed the way to the marriage—if the maid is still in her service. And, more than all, avoid the man who bears the same name as your own. Offend your best benefactor, if that benefactor’s influence has connected you one with the other. Desert the woman who loves you, if that woman is a link between you and him. Hide yourself from him, under an assumed name. Put the mountains and the seas between you; be ungrateful; be unforgiving; be all that is most repellent to your own gentler nature, rather than live under the same roof, and breathe the same air with that man. Never let the two Allan Armadales meet in this world; never, never, never!”

After reading those sentences, he pushed the manuscript from him, without looking up. The fatal reserve which he had been in a fair way of conquering but a few minutes since, possessed itself of him once more. Again his eyes wandered; again his voice sank in tone. A stranger who had heard his story, and who saw him now, would have said, “His look is lurking, his manner is bad; he is, every inch of him, his father’s son.”

“I have a question to ask you,” said Mr. Brock, breaking the silence between them, on his side. “Why have you just read that passage in your father’s letter?”

“To force me into telling you the truth,” was the answer. “You must know how much there is of my father in me, before you trust me to be Mr. Armadale’s friend. I got my letter yesterday, in the morning. Some inner warning troubled me, and I went down on the sea-shore by myself, before I broke the seal. Do you believe the dead can come back to the world they once lived in? I believe my father came back in that bright morning light, through the glare of that broad sunshine and the roar of that joyful sea, and watched me while I read. When I got to the words that you have just heard, and when I knew that the very end which he had died dreading, was the end that had really come, I felt the horror that had crept over him in his last moments, creeping over me. I struggled against myself, as he would have had me struggle. I tried to be all that was most repellent to my own gentler nature; I tried to think pitilessly of putting the mountains and the seas between me and the man who bore my name. Hours passed before I could prevail on myself to go back and run the risk of meeting Allan Armadale in this house. When I did get back, and when he met me at night on the stairs, I thought I was looking him in the face as

my father looked *his* father in the face when the cabin door closed between them. Draw your own conclusions, sir. Say, if you like, that the inheritance of my father's heathen belief in Fate is one of the inheritances he has left to me. I won't dispute it; I won't deny that all through yesterday *his* superstition was *my* superstition. The night came before I could find my way to calmer and brighter thoughts. But I did find my way. You may set it down in my favour that I lifted myself at last above the influence of this horrible letter. Do you know what helped me?"

"Did you reason with yourself?"

"I can't reason about what I feel."

"Did you quiet your mind by prayer?"

"I was not fit to pray."

"And yet something guided you to the better feeling and the truer view?"

"Something did."

"What was it?"

"My love for Allan Armadale."

He cast a doubting, almost a timid, look at Mr. Brock as he gave that answer; and, suddenly leaving the table, went back to the window-seat.

"Have I no right to speak of him in that way?" he asked, keeping his face hidden from the rector. "Have I not known him long enough; have I not done enough for him yet? Remember what my experience of other men had been, when I first saw his hand held out to me; when I first heard his voice speaking to me in my sick room. What had I known of strangers' hands all through my childhood? I had only known them as hands raised to threaten and to strike me. *His* hand put my pillow straight, and patted me on the shoulder, and gave me my food and drink. What had I known of other men's voices, when I was growing up to be a man myself? I had only known them as voices that jeered, voices that cursed, voices that whispered in corners with a vile distrust. *His* voice said to me, 'Cheer up, Midwinter! we'll soon bring you round again. You'll be strong enough in a week to go out for a drive with me in our Somersetshire lanes.' Think of the gipsy's stick; think of the devils laughing at me when I went by their windows with my little dead dog in my arms; think of the master who cheated me of my month's salary on his death-bed—and ask your own heart if the miserable wretch whom Allan Armadale has treated as his equal and his friend, has said too much in saying that he loves him? I do love him! It *will* come out of me—I can't keep it back. I love the very ground he treads on! I would give my life—yes, the life that is precious to me now, because his kindness has made it a happy one—I tell you I would give my life——"

The next words died away on his lips; the hysterical passion rose, and conquered him. He stretched out one of his hands with a wild gesture of entreaty to Mr. Brock; his head sank on the window-sill, and he burst into tears.

Even then, the hard discipline of the man's life asserted itself. He expected no sympathy; he counted on no merciful human respect for human weakness. The cruel necessity of self-suppression was present to his mind, while the tears were pouring over his cheeks. "Give me a minute," he said, faintly. "I'll fight it down in a minute; I won't distress you in this way again."

True to his resolution, in a minute he had fought it down. In a minute more he was able to speak calmly.

"We will get back, sir, to those better thoughts which brought me last night from my room to yours," he resumed. "I can only repeat that I should never have torn myself from the hold which this letter fastened on me, if I had not loved Allan Armadale with all that I have in me of a brother's love. I said to myself, 'If the thought of leaving him breaks my heart, the thought of leaving him is wrong!' That was some hours since—and I am in the same mind still. I can't believe—I won't believe—that a friendship which has grown out of nothing but kindness on one side, and nothing but gratitude on the other, is destined to lead to an evil end. I don't undervalue the strange circumstances which have made us namesakes—the strange circumstances which have brought us together, and attached us to each other—the strange circumstances which have since happened to us separately. They may, and they do, all link themselves together in my thoughts; but they shall not daunt me. I *won't* believe that these events have happened in the order of Fate, for an end that is evil—I *will* believe that they have happened in the order of God, for an end that is good. Judge, you who are a clergyman, between the dead father, whose word is in these pages, and the living son, whose word is now on his lips! Which am I—now that the two Allan Armaiales have met again in the second generation—an instrument in the hands of Fate, or an instrument in the hands of Providence? What is it appointed me to do—now that I am breathing the same air, and living under the same roof with the son of the man whom my father killed—to perpetuate my father's crime by mortally injuring him? or to atone for my father's crime by giving him the devotion of my whole life? The last of those two faiths is my faith—and shall be my faith, happen what may. In the strength of that better conviction, I have come here to trust you with my father's secret, and to confess the wretched story of my own life. In the strength of that better conviction, I can face you resolutely with the one plain question, which marks the one plain end of all that I have come here to say. Your pupil stands at the starting-point of his new career, in a position singularly friendless; his one great need is a companion of his own age on whom he can rely. The time has come, sir, to decide whether I am to be that companion or not. After all you have heard of Ozias Midwinter, tell me plainly, will you trust him to be Allan Armadale's friend?"

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Mr. Brock met that fearlessly frank question by a fearless frankness on his side.

"I believe you love Allan," he said ; "and I believe you have spoken the truth. A man who has produced that impression on me, is a man whom I am bound to trust. I trust you."

Midwinter started to his feet—his dark face flushing deep ; his eyes fixed brightly and steadily, at last, on the rector's face. "A light!" he exclaimed, tearing the pages of his father's letter, one by one, from the fastening that held them. "Let us destroy the last link that holds us to the horrible past ! Let us see this confession a heap of ashes before we part!"

"Wait!" said Mr. Brock. "Before you burn it, there is a reason for looking at it once more."

The parted leaves of the manuscript dropped from Midwinter's hands. Mr. Brock took them up, and sorted them carefully until he found the last page.

"I view your father's superstition as you view it," said the rector. "But there is a warning given you here, which you will do well (for Allan's sake, and for your own sake,) not to neglect. The last link with the past will not be destroyed when you have burnt these pages. One of the actors in this story of treachery and murder is not dead yet. Read those words."

He pushed the page across the table, with his finger on one sentence. Midwinter's agitation misled him. He mistook the indication, and read, "Avoid the widow of the man I killed—if the widow still lives."

"Not that sentence," said the rector. "The next."

Midwinter read it : "Avoid the maid whose wicked hand smoothed the way to the marriage—if the maid is still in her service."

"The maid and the mistress parted," said Mr. Brock, "at the time of the mistress's marriage. The maid and the mistress met again at Mrs. Armadale's residence in Somersetshire, last year. I myself met the woman in the village, and I myself know that her visit hastened Mrs. Armadale's death. Wait a little, and compose yourself; I see I have startled you."

He waited as he was bid, his colour fading away to a grey paleness, and the light in his clear brown eyes dying out slowly. What the rector had said had produced no transient impression on him ; there was more than doubt, there was alarm in his face, as he sat lost in his own thoughts. Was the struggle of the past night renewing itself already ? Did he feel the horror of his hereditary superstition creeping over him again ?

"Can you put me on my guard against her?" he asked, after a long interval of silence. "Can you tell me her name?"

"I can only tell you what Mrs. Armadale told me," answered Mr. Brock. "The woman acknowledged having been married in the long interval since she and her mistress had last met. But not a word more escaped her about her past life. She came to Mrs. Armadale to ask for money, under a plea of distress. She got the money, and she left the house, positively refusing, when the question was put to her, to mention her married name."

" You saw her yourself in the village. What was she like ? "

" She kept her veil down. I can't tell you."

" You can tell me what you *did* see ? "

" Certainly. I saw, as she approached me, that she moved very gracefully, that she had a beautiful figure, and that she was a little over the middle height. I noticed, when she asked me the way to Mrs. Armadale's house, that her manner was the manner of a lady, and that the tone of her voice was remarkably soft and winning. Lastly, I remembered afterwards, that she wore a thick black veil, a black bonnet, a black silk dress, and a red Paisley shawl. I feel all the importance of your possessing some better means of identifying her than I can give you. But, unhappily—"

He stopped. Midwinter was leaning eagerly across the table, and Midwinter's hand was laid suddenly on his arm.

" Is it possible that you know the woman ? " asked Mr. Brock, surprised at the sudden change in his manner.

" No."

" What have I said, then, that has startled you so ? "

" Do you remember the woman who threw herself from the river steamer ? " asked the other—" the woman who caused that succession of deaths, which opened Allan Armadale's way to the Thorpe-Ambrose estate ? "

" I remember the description of her in the police report," answered the rector.

" *That* woman," pursued Midwinter, " moved gracefully, and had a beautiful figure. *That* woman wore a black veil, a black bonnet, a black silk gown, and a red Paisley shawl— " He stopped, released his hold of Mr. Brock's arm, and abruptly resumed his chair. " Can it be the same ? " he said to himself, in a whisper. " *Is* there a fatality that follows men in the dark ? And is it following *us* in that woman's footsteps ? "

If the conjecture was right, the one event in the past which had appeared to be entirely disconnected with the events that had preceded it, was, on the contrary, the one missing link which made the chain complete. Mr. Brock's comfortable common sense instinctively denied that startling conclusion. He looked at Midwinter with a compassionate smile.

" My young friend," he said kindly, " have you cleared your mind of all superstition as completely as you think ? Is what you have just said worthy of the better resolution at which you arrived last night ? "

Midwinter's head drooped on his breast; the colour rushed back over his face : he sighed bitterly.

" You are beginning to doubt my sincerity," he said. " I can't blame you."

" I believe in your sincerity as firmly as ever," answered Mr. Brock. " I only doubt whether you have fortified the weak places in your nature as strongly as you yourself suppose. Many a man has lost the battle

against himself far oftener than you have lost it yet, and has nevertheless won his victory in the end. I don't blame you, I don't distrust you. I only notice what has happened, to put you on your guard against yourself. Come! come! Let your own better sense help you; and you will agree with me, that there is really no evidence to justify the suspicion that the woman whom I met in Somersetshire, and the woman who attempted suicide in London, are one and the same. Need an old man, like me, remind a young man, like you, that there are thousands of women in England, with beautiful figures—thousands of women who are quietly dressed in black silk gowns and red Paisley shawls?"

Midwinter caught eagerly at the suggestion; too eagerly, as it might have occurred to a harder critic on humanity than Mr. Brock.

"You are quite right, sir," he said, "and I am quite wrong. Tens of thousands of women answer the description, as you say. I have been wasting time on my own idle fancies, when I ought to have been carefully gathering up facts. If this woman ever attempts to find her way to Allan, I must be prepared to stop her." He began searching restlessly among the manuscript leaves scattered about the table, paused over one of the pages, and examined it attentively. "This helps me to something positive," he went on; "this helps me to a knowledge of her age. She was twelve at the time of Mrs. Armadale's marriage; add a year, and bring her to thirteen; add Allan's age (twenty-two), and we make her a woman of five-and-thirty at the present time. I know her age; and I know that she has her own reasons for being silent about her married life. This is something gained at the outset, and it may lead, in time, to something more." He looked up brightly again at Mr. Brock. "Am I in the right way now, sir? Am I doing my best to profit by the caution which you have kindly given me?"

"You are vindicating your own better sense," answered the rector, encouraging him to trample down his own imagination, with an Englishman's ready distrust of the noblest of the human faculties. "You are paving the way for your own happier life."

"Am I?" said the other, thoughtfully.

He searched among the papers once more, and stopped at another of the scattered pages.

"The Ship!" he exclaimed suddenly, his colour changing again, and his manner altering on the instant.

"What ship?" asked the rector.

"The ship in which the deed was done," Midwinter answered, with the first signs of impatience that he had shown yet. "The ship in which my father's murderous hand turned the lock of the cabin door."

"What of it?" said Mr. Brock.

He appeared not to hear the question; his eyes remained fixed intently on the page that he was reading.

"A French vessel, employed in the timber-trade," he said, still speaking to himself; "a French vessel, named *La Grace de Dieu*. If

my father's belief had been the right belief—if the Fatality had been following me, step by step, from my father's grave—in one or other of my voyages, I should have fallen in with that ship." He looked up again at Mr. Brock. "I am quite sure about it now," he said. "Those women are two—and not one."

Mr. Brock shook his head.

"I am glad you have come to that conclusion," he said. "But I wish you had reached it in some other way."

Midwinter started passionately to his feet, and seizing on the pages of the manuscript with both hands, flung them into the empty fire-place.

"For God's sake, let me burn it!" he exclaimed. "As long as there is a page left, I shall read it. And, as long as I read it, my father gets the better of me, in spite of myself!"

Mr. Brock pointed to the match-box. In another moment, the confession was in flames. When the fire had consumed the last morsel of paper, Midwinter drew a deep breath of relief.

"I may say, like Macbeth: 'Why, so, being gone, I am a man again!'" he broke out with a feverish gaiety. "You look fatigued, sir; and no wonder," he added in a lower tone. "I have kept you too long from your rest—I will keep you no longer. Depend on my remembering what you have told me; depend on my standing between Allan and any enemy, man or woman, who comes near him. Thank you, Mr. Brock; a thousand, thousand times, thank you! I came into this room the most wretched of living men; I can leave it now as happy as the birds that are singing outside!"

As he turned to the door, the rays of the rising sun streamed through the window, and touched the heap of ashes lying black in the black fire-place. The sensitive imagination of Midwinter kindled instantly at the sight.

"Look!" he said, joyously. "The promise of the Future shining over the ashes of the Past!"

An inexplicable pity for the man, at the moment of his life when he needed pity least, stole over the rector's heart, when the door had closed, and he was left by himself again.

"Poor fellow!" he said, with an uneasy surprise at his own compassionate impulse. "Poor fellow!"

CHAPTER III.

DAY AND NIGHT.

THE morning hours had passed; the noon had come and gone; and Mr. Brock had started on the first stage of his journey home.

After parting from the rector in Douglas Harbour, the two young men had returned to Castletown, and had there separated at the hotel

door,—Allan walking down to the waterside to look after his yacht, and Midwinter entering the house, to get the rest that he needed after a sleepless night.

He darkened his room; he closed his eyes—but no sleep came to him. On this first day of the rector's absence, his sensitive nature extravagantly exaggerated the responsibility which he now held in trust for Mr. Brock. A nervous dread of leaving Allan by himself, even for a few hours only, kept him waking and doubting until it became a relief, rather than a hardship, to rise from the bed again, and following in Allan's footsteps, to take the way to the waterside which led to the yacht.

The repairs of the little vessel were nearly completed. It was a breezy, cheerful day; the land was bright, the water was blue, the quick waves leapt crisply in the sunshine, the men were singing at their work. Descending to the cabin, Midwinter discovered his friend busily occupied in attempting to set the place to rights. Habitually the least systematic of mortals, Allan now and then awoke to an overwhelming sense of the advantages of order—and on such occasions a perfect frenzy of tidiness possessed him. He was down on his knees, hotly and wildly at work, when Midwinter looked in on him; and was fast reducing the neat little world of the cabin to its original elements of chaos, with a misdirected energy wonderful to see.

"Here's a mess!" said Allan, rising composedly on the horizon of his own accumulated litter. "Do you know, my dear fellow, I begin to wish I had let well alone."

Midwinter smiled, and came to his friend's assistance with the natural neat-handedness of a sailor.

The first object that he encountered was Allan's dressing-case, turned upside down, with half the contents scattered on the floor, and with a duster and a hearth-broom lying among them. Replacing the various objects which formed the furniture of the dressing-case one by one, Midwinter lighted unexpectedly on a miniature portrait, of the old-fashioned oval form, primly framed in a setting of small diamonds.

"You don't seem to set much value on this," he said. "What is it?"

Allan bent over him, and looked at the miniature.

"It belonged to my mother," he answered; "and I set the greatest value on it. It is a portrait of my father."

Midwinter put the miniature abruptly into Allan's hands, and withdrew to the opposite side of the cabin.

"You know best where the things ought to be put in your own dressing-case," he said, keeping his back turned on Allan. "I'll make the place tidy on this side of the cabin, and you shall make the place tidy on the other."

He began setting in order the litter scattered about him, on the cabin table and on the floor. But it seemed as if fate had decided that his friend's personal possessions should fall into his hands that morning, employ them where he might. One among the first objects which he

took up was Allan's tobacco-jar, with the stopper missing, and with a letter (which appeared by the bulk of it to contain enclosures) crumpled into the mouth of the jar in the stopper's place.

"Did you know that you had put this here?" he asked. "Is the letter of any importance?"

Allan recognized it instantly. It was the first of the little series of letters which had followed the cruising party to the Isle of Man—the letter which young Armadale had briefly referred to as bringing him "more worries from those everlasting lawyers," and had then dismissed from further notice as recklessly as usual.

"This is what comes of being particularly careful," said Allan; "here is an instance of my extreme thoughtfulness. You may not think it, but I put the letter there on purpose. Every time I went to the jar, you know, I was sure to see the letter; and every time I saw the letter, I was sure to say to myself, 'This must be answered.' There's nothing to laugh at; it was a perfectly sensible arrangement—if I could only have remembered where I put the jar. Suppose I tie a knot in my pocket-handkerchief this time? You have a wonderful memory, my dear fellow. Perhaps you'll remind me in the course of the day, in case I forget the knot next."

Midwinter saw his first chance, since Mr. Brock's departure, of usefully filling Mr. Brock's place.

"Here is your writing-case," he said; "why not answer the letter at once? If you put it away again, you may forget it again."

"Very true," returned Allan. "But the worst of it is, I can't quite make up my mind what answer to write. I want a word of advice. Come and sit down here, and I'll tell you all about it."

With his loud boyish laugh—echoed by Midwinter, who caught the infection of his gaiety—he swept a heap of miscellaneous encumbrances off the cabin sofa, and made room for his friend and himself to take their places. In the high flow of youthful spirits, the two sat down to their trifling consultation over a letter lost in a tobacco-jar. It was a memorable moment to both of them, lightly as they thought of it at the time. Before they had risen again from their places, they had taken the first irrevocable step together on the dark and tortuous road of their future lives.

Reduced to plain facts, the question on which Allan now required his friend's advice, may be stated as follows:—

While the various arrangements connected with the succession to Thorpe-Ambrose were in progress of settlement, and while the new possessor of the estate was still in London, a question had necessarily arisen relating to the person who should be appointed to manage the property. The steward employed by the ~~Roxford~~ family had written, without loss of time, to offer his services. Though a perfectly competent and trustworthy man, he failed to find favour in the eyes of the new

proprietor. Acting, as usual, on his first impulses, and resolved, at all hazards, to install Midwinter as a permanent inmate at Thorpe-Ambrose, Allan had determined that the steward's place was the place exactly fitted for his friend—for the simple reason, that it would necessarily oblige his friend to live with him on the estate. He had accordingly written to decline the proposal made to him, without consulting Mr. Brock, whose disapproval he had good reason to fear; and without telling Midwinter, who would probably (if a chance were allowed him of choosing) have declined taking a situation which his previous training had by no means fitted him to fill. Further correspondence had followed this decision, and had raised two new difficulties which looked a little embarrassing on the face of them, but which Allan, with the assistance of his lawyers, easily contrived to solve. The first difficulty, of examining the outgoing steward's books, was settled by sending a professional accountant to Thorpe-Ambrose; and the second difficulty, of putting the steward's empty cottage to some profitable use (Allan's plans for his friend comprehending Midwinter's residence under his own roof), was met by placing the cottage on the list of an active house-agent in the neighbouring county town. In this state the arrangements had been left when Allan quitted London. He had heard and thought nothing more of the matter, until a letter from the lawyers had followed him to the Isle of Man, enclosing two proposals to occupy the cottage—both received on the same day—and requesting to hear, at his earliest convenience, which of the two he was prepared to accept.

Finding himself, after having conveniently forgotten the subject for some days past, placed face to face once more with the necessity for decision, Allan now put the two proposals into his friend's hands, and, after a rambling explanation of the circumstances of the case, requested to be favoured with a word of advice. Instead of examining the proposals, Midwinter unceremoniously put them aside, and asked the two very natural and very awkward questions of who the new steward was to be, and why he was to live in Allan's house?

"I'll tell you who, and I'll tell you why, when we get to Thorpe-Ambrose," said Allan. "In the meantime, we'll call the steward X. Y. Z., and we'll say he lives with me, because I'm devilish sharp, and I mean to keep him under my own eye. You needn't look surprised. I know the man thoroughly well; he requires a good deal of management. If I offered him the steward's place beforehand, his modesty would get in his way, and he would say—'No.' If I pitch him into it neck and crop, without a word of warning and with nobody at hand to relieve him of the situation, he'll have nothing for it but to consult my interests, and say—'Yes.' X. Y. Z. is not at all a bad fellow, I can tell you. You'll see him when we go to Thorpe-Ambrose; and I rather think you and he will get on uncommonly well together."

The humourous twinkle in Allan's eye, the sly significance in Allan's voice, would have betrayed his secret to a prosperous man. Midwinter

was as far from suspecting it as the carpenters who were at work above them on the deck of the yacht.

"Is there no steward now on the estate?" he asked, his face showing plainly that he was far from feeling satisfied with Allan's answer. "Is the business neglected all this time?"

"Nothing of the sort!" returned Allan. "The business is going with 'a wet sheet and a flowing sail, and a wind that follows free.' I'm not joking—I'm only metaphorical. A regular accountant has poked his nose into the books, and a steady-going lawyer's clerk attends at the office once a week. That doesn't look like neglect, does it? Leave the new steward alone for the present, and just tell me which of those two tenants you would take, if you were in my place."

Midwinter opened the proposals, and read them attentively.

The first proposal was from no less a person than the solicitor at Thorpe-Ambrose, who had first informed Allan at Paris of the large fortune that had fallen into his hands. This gentleman wrote personally, to say that he had long admired the cottage, which was charmingly situated within the limits of the Thorpe-Ambrose grounds. He was a bachelor, of studious habits, desirous of retiring to a country seclusion after the wear and tear of his business hours; and he ventured to say that Mr. Armadale, in accepting him as a tenant, might count on securing an unobtrusive neighbour, and on putting the cottage into responsible and careful hands.

The second proposal came through the house-agent, and proceeded from a total stranger. The tenant who offered for the cottage, in this case, was a retired officer in the army—one Major Milroy. His family merely consisted of an invalid wife and an only child—a young lady. His references were unexceptionable; and he, too, was especially anxious to secure the cottage, as the perfect quiet of the situation was exactly what was required by Mrs. Milroy in her feeble state of health.

"Well! which profession shall I favour?" asked Allan. "The army or the law?"

"There seems to me to be no doubt about it," said Midwinter. "The lawyer has been already in correspondence with you; and the lawyer's claim is, therefore, the claim to be preferred."

"I knew you would say that. In all the thousands of times I have asked other people for advice, I never yet got the advice I wanted. Here's this business of letting the cottage as an instance. I'm all on the other side myself. I want to have the major."

"Why?"

Young Armadale laid his forefinger on that part of the agent's letter which enumerated Major Milroy's family, and which contained the three words—"a young lady."

"A bachelor of studious habits walking about my grounds," said Allan, "is not an interesting object; a young lady is. I have not the least doubt Miss Milroy is a charming girl. Ozias Midwinter of the

serious countenance ! think of her pretty muslin dress flitting about among your trees and committing trespasses on your property ; think of her adorable feet trotting into your fruit-garden, and her delicious fresh lips kissing your ripe peaches ; think of her dimpled hands among your early violets, and her little cream-coloured nose buried in your blush-roses ! What does the studious bachelor offer me, in exchange for the loss of all this ? He offers me a rheumatic brown object in gaiters and a wig. No ! no ! Justice is good, my dear friend ; but, believe me, Miss Milroy is better."

"Can you be serious about any mortal thing, Allan ? "

"I'll try to be, if you like. I know I ought to take the lawyer ; but what can I do if the major's daughter keeps running in my head ? "

Midwinter returned resolutely to the just and the sensible view of the matter, and pressed it on his friend's attention with all the persuasion of which he was master. After listening with exemplary patience until he had done, Allan swept a supplementary accumulation of litter off the cabin table, and produced from his waistcoat-pocket a half-crown coin.

"I've got an entirely new idea," he said. "Let's leave it to chance."

The absurdity of the proposal—as coming from a landlord—was irresistible. Midwinter's gravity deserted him.

"I'll spin," continued Allan, "and you shall call. We must give precedence to the army, of course ; so we'll say Heads, the major ; Tails, the lawyer. One spin to decide. Now, then, look out ! "

He spun the half-crown on the cabin table.

"Tails !" cried Midwinter, humouring what he believed to be one of Allan's boyish jokes.

The coin fell on the table with the Head uppermost.

"You don't mean to say you are really in earnest !" said Midwinter, as the other opened his writing-case and dipped his pen in the ink.

"Oh, but I am, though !" replied Allan. "Chance is on my side, and Miss Milroy's ; and you're outvoted, two to one. It's no use arguing. The major has fallen uppermost, and the major shall have the cottage. I won't leave it to the lawyers—they'll only be worrying me with more letters ; I'll write myself."

He wrote his answers to the two proposals, literally in two minutes. One to the house-agent : "Dear sir, I accept Major Milroy's offer; let him come in when he pleases. Yours truly, Allan Armadale." And one to the lawyer : "Dear sir, I regret that circumstances prevent me from accepting your proposal. Yours truly, &c., &c." "People make a fuss about letter-writing," Allan remarked, when he had done. "I find it easy enough."

He wrote the addresses on his two notes, and stamped them for the post, whistling gaily. While he had been writing, he had not noticed how his friend was occupied. When he had done, it struck him that a sudden silence had fallen on the cabin ; and, looking up, he observed that Midwinter's whole attention was strangely concentrated on the half-crown,

as it lay head uppermost on the table. Allan suspended his whistling in astonishment.

"What on earth are you doing?" he asked.

"I was only wondering," replied Midwinter.

"What about?" persisted Allan.

"I was wondering," said the other, handing him back the half-crown, "whether there is such a thing as chance."

Half-an-hour later, the two notes were posted; and Allan, whose close superintendence of the repairs of the yacht had hitherto allowed him but little leisure-time on shore, had proposed to wile away the idle hours by taking a walk in Castletown. Even Midwinter's nervous anxiety to deserve Mr. Brock's confidence in him, could detect nothing objectionable in this harmless proposal, and the young men set forth together to see what they could make of the metropolis of the Isle of Man.

It is doubtful if there is a place on the habitable globe which, regarded as a sight-seeing investment offering itself to the spare attention of strangers, yields so small a per-cent-age of interest in return, as Castletown. Beginning with the waterside, there was an inner harbour to see, with a drawbridge to let vessels through; an outer harbour, ending in a dwarf lighthouse; a view of a flat coast to the right, and a view of a flat coast to the left. In the central solitudes of the city, there was a squat grey building called "the castle;" also a memorial pillar dedicated to one Governor Smelt, with a flat top for a statue, and no statue standing on it; also a barrack, holding the half company of soldiers allotted to the island, and exhibiting one spirit-broken sentry at its lonely door. The prevalent colour of the town was faint grey. The few shops open were parted at frequent intervals by other shops closed and deserted in despair. The weary lounging of boatmen on shore was trebly weary here; the youth of the district smoked together in speechless depression under the lee of a dead wall; the ragged children said mechanically, "Give us a penny," and before the charitable hand could search the merciful pocket, lapsed away again in misanthropic doubt of the human nature they addressed. The silence of the grave overflowed the churchyard, and filled this miserable town. But one edifice, prosperous to look at, rose consolatory in the desolation of these dreadful streets. Frequented by the students of the neighbouring "College of King William," this building was naturally dedicated to the uses of a pastrycook's shop. Here, at least (viewed through the friendly medium of the window), there was something going on for a stranger to see; for here, on high stools, the pupils of the college sat, with swinging legs and slowly-moving jaws, and, hushed in the horrid stillness of Castletown, gorged their pastry gravely, in an atmosphere of awful silence.

"Hang me if I can look any longer at the boys and the tarts!" said Allan, dragging his friend away from the pastrycook's shop. "Let's try if we can't find something else to amuse us in the next street."

The first amusing object which the next street presented was a carver-and-gilder's shop, expiring feebly in the last stage of commercial decay. The counter inside displayed nothing to view but the recumbent head of a boy, peacefully asleep in the unbroken solitude of the place. In the window were exhibited to the passing stranger three forlorn little fly-spotted frames; a small posting-bill, dusty with long-continued neglect, announcing that the premises were to let; and one coloured print, the last of a series illustrating the horrors of drunkenness, on the fiercest temperance principles. The composition—representing an empty bottle of gin, an immensely spacious garret, a perpendicular Scripture-reader, and a horizontal expiring family—appealed to public favour, under the entirely unobjectionable title of *The Hand of Death*. Allan's resolution to extract amusement from Castletown by main force had resisted a great deal, but it failed him at this stage of the investigations. He suggested trying an excursion to some other place. Midwinter readily agreeing, they went back to the hotel to make inquiries. Thanks to the mixed influence of Allan's ready gift of familiarity, and total want of method in putting his questions, a perfect deluge of information flowed in on the two strangers, relating to every subject but the subject which had actually brought them to the hotel. They made various interesting discoveries in connection with the laws and constitution of the Isle of Man, and the manners and customs of the natives. To Allan's delight, the Manxmen spoke of England as of a well-known adjacent island, situated at a certain distance from the central empire of the Isle of Man. It was further revealed to the two Englishmen that this happy little nation rejoiced in laws of its own, publicly proclaimed once a year by the governor and the two head-judges, grouped together on the top of an ancient mound, in fancy costumes appropriate to the occasion. Possessing this enviable institution, the island added to it the inestimable blessing of a local parliament, called the House of Keys, an assembly far in advance of the other parliament belonging to the neighbouring island, in this respect—that the members dispensed with the people, and solemnly elected each other. With these, and many more local particulars, extracted from all sorts and conditions of men, in and about the hotel, Allan wiled away the weary time in his own essentially desultory manner, until the gossip died out of itself, and Midwinter (who had been speaking apart with the landlord) quietly recalled him to the matter in hand. The finest coast scenery in the island was said to be to the westward and the southward, and there was a fishing town in those regions called Port St. Mary, with an hotel at which travellers could sleep. If Allan's impressions of Castletown still inclined him to try an excursion to some other place, he had only to say so, and a carriage would be produced immediately. Allan jumped at the proposal, and in ten minutes more, he and Midwinter were on their way to the western wilds of the island.

With trifling incidents, the day of Mr. Brock's departure had worn on thus far. With trifling incidents, in which not even Midwinter's nervous

watchfulness could see anything to distrust, it was still to proceed, until the night came—a night which one at least of the two companions was destined to remember to the end of his life.

Before the travellers had advanced two miles on their road, an accident happened. The horse fell, and the driver reported that the animal had seriously injured himself. There was no alternative but to send for another carriage to Castletown, or to get on to Port St. Mary on foot. Deciding to walk, Midwinter and Allan had not gone far before they were overtaken by a gentleman driving alone in an open chaise. He civilly introduced himself as a medical man, living close to Port St. Mary, and offered seats in his carriage. Always ready to make new acquaintances, Allan at once accepted the proposal. He and the doctor (whose name was ascertained to be Hawbury) became friendly and familiar before they had been five minutes in the chaise together; Midwinter sitting behind them, reserved and silent, on the back seat. They separated just outside Port St. Mary, before Mr. Hawbury's house, Allan boisterously admiring the doctor's neat French windows, and pretty flower-garden and lawn; and wringing his hand at parting, as if they had known each other from boyhood upwards. Arrived in Port St. Mary, the two friends found themselves in a second Castletown on a smaller scale. But the country round, wild, open, and hilly, deserved its reputation. A walk brought them well enough on with the day—still the harmless, idle day that it had been from the first—to see the evening near at hand. After waiting a little to admire the sun, setting grandly over hill, and heath, and crag, and talking, while they waited, of Mr. Brock and his long journey home—they returned to the hotel to order their early supper. Nearer and nearer, the night, and the adventure which the night was to bring with it, came to the two friends; and still the only incidents that happened were incidents to be laughed at, if they were noticed at all. The supper was badly cooked; the waiting-maid was impenetrably stupid; the old-fashioned bell-rope in the coffee-room had come down in Allan's hands, and striking in its descent a painted china shepherdess on the chimney-piece, had laid the figure in fragments on the floor. Events as trifling as these were still the only events that had happened, when the twilight faded, and the lighted candles were brought into the room.

Finding Midwinter, after the double fatigue of a sleepless night and a restless day, but little inclined for conversation, Allan left him resting on the sofa, and lounged into the passage of the hotel, on the chance of discovering somebody to talk to. Here, another of the trivial incidents of the day brought Allan and Mr. Hawbury together again, and helped—whether happily, or not, yet remained to be seen—to strengthen the acquaintance between them on either side.

The "bar" of the hotel was situated at one end of the passage, and the landlady was in attendance there, mixing a glass of liquor for the doctor, who had just looked in for a little gossip. On Allan's asking permission to make a third in the drinking and the gossiping, Mr. Hawbury civilly

handed him the glass which the landlady had just filled. It contained cold brandy-and-water. A marked change in Allan's face, as he suddenly drew back and asked for whisky instead, caught the doctor's medical eye. "A case of nervous antipathy," said Mr. Hawbury, quietly taking the glass away again. The remark obliged Allan to acknowledge that he had an insurmountable loathing (which he was foolish enough to be a little ashamed of mentioning) to the smell and taste of brandy. No matter with what diluting liquid the spirit was mixed, the presence of it—instantly detected by his organs of taste and smell—turned him sick and faint, if the drink touched his lips. Starting from this personal confession, the talk turned on antipathies in general; and the doctor acknowledged, on his side, that he took a professional interest in the subject, and that he possessed a collection of curious cases at home, which his new acquaintance was welcome to look at, if Allan had nothing else to do that evening, and if he would call, when the medical work of the day was over, in an hour's time.

Cordially accepting the invitation (which was extended to Midwinter also, if he cared to profit by it), Allan returned to the coffee-room to look after his friend. Half asleep and half awake, Midwinter was still stretched on the sofa, with the local newspaper just dropping out of his languid hand.

"I heard your voice in the passage," he said drowsily. "Who were you talking to?"

"The doctor," replied Allan. "I am going to smoke a cigar with him, in an hour's time. Will you come too?"

Midwinter assented with a weary sigh. Always shyly unwilling to make new acquaintances, fatigue increased the reluctance he now felt to become Mr. Hawbury's guest. As matters stood, however, there was no alternative but to go—for, with Allan's constitutional imprudence, there was no safely trusting him alone anywhere, and more especially in a stranger's house. Mr. Brock would certainly not have left his pupil to visit the doctor alone; and Midwinter was still nervously conscious that he occupied Mr. Brock's place.

"What shall we do till it's time to go?" asked Allan, looking about him. "Anything in this?" he added, observing the fallen newspaper, and picking it up from the floor.

"I'm too tired to look. If you find anything interesting, read it out," said Midwinter—thinking that the reading might help to keep him awake.

Part of the newspaper, and no small part of it, was devoted to extracts from books recently published in London. One of the works most largely laid under contribution in this manner, was of the sort to interest Allan: it was a highly-spiced narrative of Travelling Adventures in the wilds of Australia. Pouncing on an extract which described the sufferings of the travelling-party, lost in a trackless wilderness, and in danger of dying by thirst, Allan announced that he had found something to make his friend's flesh creep, and began eagerly to read the passage aloud. Resolute not to sleep, Midwinter

followed the progress of the adventure, sentence by sentence, without missing a word. The consultation of the lost travellers, with death by thirst staring them in the face; the resolution to press on while their strength lasted; the fall of a heavy shower, the vain efforts made to catch the rain-water, the transient relief experienced by sucking their wet clothes; the sufferings renewed a few hours after; the night-advance of the strongest of the party, leaving the weakest behind; the following a flight of birds, when morning dawned; the discovery by the lost men of the broad pool of water that saved their lives—all this, Midwinter's fast failing attention mastered painfully; Allan's voice growing fainter and fainter on his ear, with every sentence that was read. Soon, the next words seemed to drop away gently, and nothing but the slowly-sinking sound of the voice was left. Then, the light in the room darkened gradually; the sound dwindled into delicious silence; and the last waking impressions of the weary Midwinter came peacefully to an end.

The next event of which he was conscious, was a sharp ringing at the closed door of the hotel. He started to his feet, with the ready alacrity of a man whose life has accustomed him to wake at the shortest notice. An instant's look round showed him that the room was empty; and a glance at his watch told him that it was close on midnight. The noise made by the sleepy servant in opening the door, and the tread the next moment of quick footsteps in the passage, filled him with a sudden foreboding of something wrong. As he hurriedly stepped forward to go out and make inquiry, the door of the coffee-room opened, and the doctor stood before him.

"I am sorry to disturb you," said Mr. Hawbury. "Don't be alarmed; there's nothing wrong."

"Where is my friend?" asked Midwinter.

"At the pier-head," answered the doctor. "I am, to a certain extent, responsible for what he is doing now; and I think some careful person, like yourself, ought to be with him."

The hint was enough for Midwinter. He and the doctor set out for the pier immediately—Mr. Hawbury mentioning, on the way, the circumstances under which he had come to the hotel.

Punctual to the appointed hour, Allan had made his appearance at the doctor's house; explaining that he had left his weary friend so fast asleep on the sofa that he had not had the heart to wake him. The evening had passed pleasantly, and the conversation had turned on many subjects—until, in an evil hour, Mr. Hawbury had dropped a hint which showed that he was fond of sailing, and that he possessed a pleasure-boat of his own in the harbour. Excited on the instant by his favourite topic, Allan had left his host no hospitable alternative but to take him to the pier-head and show him the boat. The beauty of the night and the softness of the breeze had done the rest of the mischief—they had filled Allan with irresistible longings for a sail by moonlight. Prevented from accompanying his guest by professional hindrances which obliged him to remain

on shore, the doctor, not knowing what else to do, had ventured on disturbing Midwinter, rather than take the responsibility of allowing Mr. Armadale (no matter how well he might be accustomed to the sea) to set off on a sailing trip at midnight entirely by himself.

The time taken to make this explanation brought Midwinter and the doctor to the pier-head. There, sure enough, was young Armadale in the boat, hoisting the sail, and singing the sailor's " Yo-heave-ho ! " at the top of his voice.

" Come along, old boy ! " cried Allan. " You're just in time for a frolic by moonlight ! "

Midwinter suggested a frolic by daylight, and an adjournment to bed in the meantime.

" Bed ! " cried Allan, on whose harum-scarum high spirits Mr. Hawbury's hospitality had certainly not produced a sedative effect. " Hear him, doctor ! one would think he was ninety ! Bed, you drowsy old dormouse ! Look at that—and think of bed, if you can ! "

He pointed to the sea. The moon was shining in the cloudless heaven ; the night-breeze blew soft and steady from the land ; the peaceful waters rippled joyfully in the silence and the glory of the night. Midwinter turned to the doctor, with a wise resignation to circumstances : he had seen enough to satisfy him that all words of remonstrance would be words simply thrown away.

" How is the tide ? " he asked.

Mr. Hawbury told him.

" Are the oars in the boat ? "

" Yes."

" I am well used to the sea," said Midwinter, descending the pier-steps. " You may trust me to take care of my friend, and to take care of the boat."

" Good-night, doctor ! " shouted Allan. " Your whisky-and-water is delicious—your boat's a little beauty—and you're the best fellow I ever met in my life ! "

The doctor laughed, and waved his hand ; and the boat glided out from the harbour, with Midwinter at the helm.

As the breeze then blew, they were soon abreast of the westward headland, bounding the bay of Poolvash ; and the question was started whether they should run out to sea, or keep along the shore. The wisest proceeding, in the event of the wind failing them, was to keep by the land. Midwinter altered the course of the boat, and they sailed on smoothly in a south-westerly direction, abreast of the coast.

Little by little the cliff's rose in height, and the rocks, massed wild and jagged, showed rifted black chasms yawning deep in their seaward sides. Off the bold promontory called Spanish Head, Midwinter looked ominously at his watch. But Allan pleaded hard for half-an-hour more, and for a glance at the famous channel of the Sound, which they were now fast nearing, and of which he had heard some startling stories from the

workmen employed on his yacht. The new change which Midwinter's compliance with this request rendered it necessary to make in the course of the boat, brought her close to the wind ; and revealed, on one side, the grand view of the southernmost shores of the Isle of Man, and, on the other, the black precipices of the islet called the Calf, separated from the mainland by the dark and dangerous channel of the Sound.

Once more Midwinter looked at his watch. "We have gone far enough," he said. "Stand by the sheet!"

"Stop!" cried Allan, from the bows of the boat. "Good God! here's a wrecked ship right ahead of us!"

Midwinter let the boat fall off a little, and looked where the other pointed.

There, stranded midway between the rocky boundaries on either side of the Sound—there, never again to rise on the living waters from her grave on the sunken rock ; lost and lonely in the quiet night ; high, and dark, and ghostly in the yellow moonshine, lay the Wrecked Ship.

"I know the vessel," said Allan, in great excitement. "I heard my workmen talking of her yesterday. She drifted in here, on a pitch dark night, when they couldn't see the lights. A poor old worn-out merchantman, Midwinter, that the shipbrokers have bought to break up. Let's run in, and have a look at her."

Midwinter hesitated. All the old sympathies of his sea-life strongly inclined him to follow Allan's suggestion—but the wind was falling light ; and he distrusted the broken water and the swirling currents of the channel ahead. "This is an ugly place to take a boat into, when you know nothing about it," he said.

"Nonsense!" returned Allan. "It's as light as day, and we float in two feet of water."

Before Midwinter could answer, the current caught the boat, and swept them onward through the channel, straight towards the Wreck.

"Lower the sail," said Midwinter quietly, "and ship the oars. We are running down on her fast enough now, whether we like it or not."

Both well accustomed to the use of the oar, they brought the course of the boat under sufficient control to keep her on the smoothest side of the channel—the side which was nearest to the Islet of the Calf. As they came swiftly up with the wreck, Midwinter resigned his oar to Allan ; and, watching his opportunity, caught a hold with the boat-hook on the forechains of the vessel. The next moment they had the boat safely in hand, under the lee of the Wreck.

The ship's ladder used by the workmen hung over the forechains. Mounting it, with the boat's rope in his teeth, Midwinter secured one end, and lowered the other to Allan in the boat. "Make that fast," he said, "and wait till I see if it's all safe on board." With those words, he disappeared behind the bulwark.

"Wait?" repeated Allan, in the blankest astonishment at his friend's

excessive caution. "What on earth does he mean? I'll be hanged if I wait—where one of us goes, the other goes too!"

He hitched the loose end of the rope round the forward thwart of the boat; and, swinging himself up the ladder, stood the next moment on the deck. "Anything very dreadful on board?" he inquired sarcastically, as he and his friend met.

Midwinter smiled. "Nothing whatever," he replied. "But I couldn't be sure that we were to have the whole ship to ourselves, till I got over the bulwark, and looked about me."

Allan took a turn on the deck, and surveyed the wreck critically from stem to stern.

"Not much of a vessel," he said; "the Frenchmen generally build better ships than this."

Midwinter crossed the deck, and eyed Allan in a momentary silence.

"Frenchmen?" he repeated, after an interval. "Is this vessel French?"

"Yes."

"How do you know?"

"The men I have got at work on the yacht told me. They know all about her."

Midwinter came a little nearer. His swarthy face began to look, to Allan's eyes, unaccountably pale in the moonlight.

"Did they mention what trade she was engaged in?"

"Yes.—The timber-trade."

As Allan gave that answer, Midwinter's lean brown hand clutched him fast by the shoulder; and Midwinter's teeth chattered in his head, like the teeth of a man struck by a sudden chill.

"Did they tell you her name?" he asked, in a voice that dropped suddenly to a whisper.

"They did, I think. But it has slipped my memory.—Gently, old fellow; those long claws of yours are rather tight on my shoulder."

"Was the name ——?" he stopped; removed his hand; and dashed away the great drops that were gathering on his forehead—"Was the name *La Grace de Dieu*?"

"How the deuce did you come to know it? That's the name, sure enough. *La Grace de Dieu*."

At one bound, Midwinter leapt on the bulwark of the wreck.

"The boat!!!" he cried, with a scream of horror that rang far and wide through the stillness of the night, and brought Allan instantly to his side.

The lower end of the carelessly-hitched rope was loose on the water; and, a-head, in the track of the moonlight, a small black object was floating out of view. The boat was adrift.

Shakspeare in France.

STUDENTS of dramatic art in general, or of Shakspeare's art in particular, may find their researches illuminated by suggestive and unexpected sidelights, if they examine the fluctuations of opinion in France. We not unfrequently hear, both in England and Germany, that the French mind is incompetent to a genuine appreciation of Shakspeare. All such national incriminations are dangerous, not to say foolish; yet they have all a certain basis; and we may ask ourselves, what is the amount of truth embodied in the present example? That the nation which produced and cherishes Molière should have hesitated in its acceptance of Shakspeare, cannot reasonably be explained on the supposition of national deficiency in the requisite sensibilities, but must be assigned to some want of perfect adaptation in the form of Shakspeare's art to the trained habits of thought and organized tendencies which constitute national taste. And the proof of this is disclosed in the fact that no sooner was there established a successful revolt against certain despotic canons of criticism, and a wider culture had shown that the classic drama was only *one* form of the art, which by no means excluded other and very different forms, than the admiration for Shakspeare as a poet rapidly grew into a sort of superstition. But even then the admiration was rather reflective than instinctive—rather the result of culture than of direct emotion. The obstacles to an immediate influence, such as a poet exercises over his own nation, remained. In France, as in England and Germany, there were Shakspeare-bigots; but in France there was no adoption of Shakspeare into the national literature; on the French stage there was no recognized place for him. Whether this want of perfect adaptation between the English poet and the French nation is to be wholly ascribed to the ineradicable differences between the French and English taste, or partly also to the defects in Shakspeare's art, which prevent his overcoming the influence of national differences, is a delicate question. The fact is worthy of notice, that after a century of struggle—after the gradual disappearance of all the arbitrary and pedantic rules which at first opposed the introduction of Shakspeare to the French stage—the enthusiasm of eminent critics, and a literary curiosity on the part of most cultivated readers, have not yet succeeded in overcoming the national indifference. In Germany, Shakspeare is as much at home as in England; the stage and the closet admit him to the foremost place. The Théâtre Français has not yet adopted his plays into its repertory.

The first manifesto of French criticism is to be read in Voltaire, who

made his countrymen acquainted with the existence of a great poet, as in the case of Newton he made them aware of a supreme mathematician. Much nonsense has been written and spoken respecting Voltaire's ridiculous criticisms ; but whoever looks impartially into this matter will see that the superficiality which is so freely attributed to Voltaire really belongs to his antagonists. He took his stand on certain definite principles ; these principles may have been one-sided, but at any rate they were systematic ; and a man who judges from principles may be wrong, but cannot justly be called superficial by those who judge from none.

Voltaire in his deliberate expressions of opinion undoubtedly shows that he recognized the royal grandeur of Shakspere's genius. If he regarded it as the grandeur of a barbarian, this was because to some extent the grandeur *was* barbaric, and also because the conditions of his own culture were such as to make the barbarism seem greater. By nature, and still more by education, he was unfitted for the large appreciation of a genius so various ;—an appreciation found only in exquisitely poetic minds, and in those whose culture has been refined by the teaching of poetic minds. Indeed Shakspere is so abundant in excellences and defects, so many-sided, that few critics in their private convictions believe any one else sees all that they see ; and Voltaire was shut out from seeing many things, or saw them in a false light, by a preoccupation with other ideals. He could not consider Corneille and Racine models of art without to some extent depreciating Shakspere. Nevertheless, as a man of sensibility and keen insight, he could not fail to be affected by works of real poetic worth ; and his insight was sharpened by that initiation into the secrets of the art which generally comes with the practice of an art. To have written dramas is a great preparation for the subtle appreciation of dramas. Critics in general do not understand this. They cannot recognize their own deficiencies. They will sometimes (not always) admit that unless a man has studied the means and methods of painting, he is an imperfect judge of pictures ; but they will not admit that one who has never studied the mechanism of a drama is an imperfect judge of dramas. Voltaire had studied the dramatic art : but if his study was an aid it was also an obstacle in judging a form of art widely different from that which he thought the best. There is truth in Johnson's remark,—“Sir, the poetry which a man deliberately sits down to write, that, and that only, will he praise ;” but it must be accepted with qualification. If Voltaire thought the drama of Corneille and Racine not only exquisite, but, with some minor modifications, the best adapted to his nation—and how could he think otherwise when he saw the nation idolizing these poets ?—it is clear that he must have rejected the drama of Shakspere as a form of art incompatible with the French ideal. The two dramas had different aims and different methods ; they had, consequently, different merits and different defects. Voltaire failed to understand Shakspere. Shakspere would not less have misunderstood Voltaire.

We laugh at the French for their misapprehensions of our drama, and

despise the short-sighted pedantry which prevents their enjoying excellences so unanimously enjoyed by us that we think all rightly-constituted minds must delight in them. Yet we have no misgivings when we find ourselves totally insensible to excellences which charm the whole French nation. We assume that *their* insensibility comes from narrowness of mind, *our* insensibility from superior culture.

The drama has an immediate and an ulterior aim. Its immediate aim is to delight an audience; its ulterior aim is the ennobling and enlarging of the mind through the sympathies—*παθημάτων κάθαρσις*. There are obviously many methods of delighting an audience, from the most delicate refinements of intellectual gratification, down to the coarsest appeals to the passions and the senses. The artist chooses his means according to the impulses of his own genius, and adapts them to his audience; the critic judges whether the means chosen are rightly chosen.

Such being the aim of the dramatist, a little reflection will assure us that over and above the general conditions to which all poetry must conform, the drama as a special art must be under special conditions. These are of two kinds: first, the technical exigencies and capacities of the stage—*i. e.* the theatrical conditions, which determine what *can* and *must* be done for due realization of the poet's intentions; and secondly, the emotional exigencies and capacities of the audience—*i. e.* the psychological conditions—which guide the dramatist in his selection of means whereby the sympathies are to be moved. A detail may be exquisitely poetic, yet be a defect if impracticable or ineffective in stage representation, or if it lie beyond the apprehension and sympathy of the audience. A passage may be poetical or thoughtful, yet be quite unfit for the drama, either because it retards the culmination of emotion, or because it is too remote for immediate apprehension.

Writers on the drama rarely possess the technical and special psychological knowledge indispensable to fine criticism. Their observations, for the most part, turn upon the general conditions, not on the special conditions, and are, consequently, on a par with those made about pictures by amateurs unacquainted with the laws of perspective, composition, and colour—insensible to the exigencies and limits of the art. Their criticisms may be valuable and suggestive in elucidating questions of literature, but the drama, as a special form of literature, requires a more technical estimate.

The French and English drama are very much alike in all their lower forms of melodrama, farce and spectacle, which appeal to mixed audiences, for the most part little cultivated, and but slightly susceptible to the more refined delicacies of art. But in their higher forms of tragedy and comedy they are extremely unlike; the one appealing to a section of the public, and that section classical in its training; the other appealing to all classes, and endeavouring to satisfy the various demands of all classes. The one repudiates an effect gained at the expense of art; the other is careless of art which does not produce a powerful effect. The French critic is

annoyed by a solecism in language; the English critic, though grateful for every beauty of diction, thinks a great deal more of a "point" or a "situation." A Frenchman is in raptures with the sober elegance, and discreet power of a work wherein nothing is forced beyond the accepted limits of good taste; an Englishman regards this sobriety as feebleness, and this discreetness as coldness, inevitably productive of *ennui*. The French drama differs from the English drama in the conduct of its action, in the selection and exhibition of character, and in its diction. A critic may prefer one to the other, as a peach may be preferred to a pineapple; but one can never become the standard by which to judge the other.

It was Voltaire's error to have judged Shakspeare by the French standard, as it is our error to judge Corneille and Racine by the Shakspearian standard. When Voltaire came to England, he saw *Othello*, *Hamlet*, and *Julius Cæsar* performed; he was affected and offended by them: he felt their terrible power, and disapproved their vehemence and licence. His taste was offended. While his emotions were thrilled with their passionate scenes, and his soul stirred by their great characters, he was constantly annoyed by their many departures from what he had been trained to consider as the true principles of art. He saw, as a dramatist, that the French ideal might enlarge its limits to include many sources of æsthetic delight which it had rejected; but he also saw that the English ideal was not one which could serve as a model for France. In the interest of his own works he pleaded for greater liberty, and cited the English drama in justification of the plea. "France is not the only country which has tragedies," he wrote in 1735, "and our taste, or rather our custom of bringing nothing on the stage but long conversations on love does not delight other nations. In general, our stage is devoid of action and deficient in subjects of exalted interest. The presence on the stage of our *petits maîtres* interferes with the action; and exalted subjects are banished because our nation dares not think on them. Had you seen the *Julius Cæsar* of Shakspeare played as I have seen it, and pretty nearly as I have translated it, our declarations of love and our confidants would seem miserable in comparison." As a dramatist he rebelled against the pedantry of critics, who were *not* dramatists, and who in France exercised such despotic power, that Corneille, even *after* his great success, declared that he "would be the first to condemn the *Cid* if it sinned against the great and sovereign maxims of Aristotle." But Voltaire in pleading for liberty was firm against licence. He struggled against the restrictions which prevented the free movement of his invention; but the rules which he would fain have loosened he had no thought of flinging away. His imitations of Shakspeare were attempts to incorporate with the style of his native drama certain elements which he admired; but from first to last he thought the style of Shakspeare barbarous, and preferred that of Addison's *Cato*, which had "*des vers dignes de Virgile et des sentiments dignes de Caton!*" In a letter written two days before the one we quoted just now, he speaks of Shakspeare as an English Corneille, but adds, "*grand fou*

d'ailleurs, et ressemblant plus à Gilles qu'à Corneille ; mais il a des morceaux admirables." In the remonstrance which he addressed to the French Academy, calling on it to protest against principles which threatened the supremacy of Corneille, he writes angrily, and sometimes absurdly, but his point of view is consistent. The indecent and trivial expressions, and the anachronisms which he notices in Shakspeare, were grave offences in the eyes of Frenchmen.

The broad contrast of the two forms of art is visible in this sentence : "A Scotch judge," he says, "who has published *Elements of Criticism* in three volumes, in which there are some delicate and judicious reflections, has nevertheless been unfortunate enough to compare the first scene of that monstrosity *Hamlet* with the first scene of that chef-d'œuvre *Iphigénie*. He affirms that the beautiful verses of Arcas are not worth the reply of the sentinel : 'there's not a mouse stirring.' Yes, a soldier may, indeed, reply thus, *in the guard-room ; but not on the stage*, before the highest persons in the kingdom, who express themselves with refinement, and *before whom we must express ourselves in the same style.*" A drama written for a court and a classical public, had to adapt itself to the tastes and prejudices of that public—these were psychological conditions; and Voltaire was right in asking the Academy, which represented authority, "whether the nation which has produced *Iphigénie* and *Athalie*, ought to abandon them for men strangling women on the stage, for porters, for witches, buffoons and drunken priests ? whether our court, so long renowned for its *politesse* and taste, ought to be converted into an alehouse ? and whether the palace of a virtuous sovereign ought to be a place for prostitution ?" Few Englishmen will doubt that *Hamlet* is incomparably greater as a poem and as a play than *Iphigénie* ; but, perhaps, few Englishmen are in a condition to appreciate *Iphigénie*, and still fewer have been from youth upwards trained to look upon dramatic art so as to feel the force of Voltaire's irony, when he says after a sketch of *Hamlet*, "We cannot have a more forcible example of the difference of taste among nations. How shall we speak after this of the rules of Aristotle and the three unities, and *les bienséances*, and the necessity of never leaving the scene empty, and that no person should go on or off without an apparent motive ? How talk after this of the artful arrangement of plot and its natural development ? of the language being simple and noble ? of making princes speak with the propriety which they have or ought to have ? of never violating the rules of language ?"

In this matter of language alone, the psychological conditions of the two nations are widely opposed. The French are exclusive even to the point of pedantry ; the English are daring to laxity. An energetic expression, a forcible image, delights us, shocks them. We cannot realize to ourselves what it is which offends Voltaire in Hamlet's mention of his mother's shoes. The familiarity is a beauty to us, because it has a vividness which intensifies the pathos. In like manner, the "itching palm" of Cassius seems to us an admirable expression ; to Voltaire it seems ignoble.

How could the Academy, jealous in all matters of language, tolerate such a passage as—

What's the matter, you dissentious rogues,
That rubbing the poor itch of your opinion
Make yourselves scabs ?

If we suffer it to pass, it is in favour of its energy, our admiration of energy in all things exceeding our admiration of elegance. But it must be confessed that Shakspeare often carries this national characteristic to extremes, and that among his not unfrequent hyperboles there is the hyperbole of brutality. It requires a taste accustomed to robust food not to demur to the excess of energy in such passages as—

All the contagion of the south light on you,
You shames of Rome ! you herd of— Boils and plagues
Plaster you o'er, that you may be abhorred
Farther than seen, and one infect another
Against the wind a mile !

It is requisite to bear in mind the differences of national taste in considering Voltaire's criticisms on Shakspeare, and we shall then see that his estimate was by no means so superficial and absurd as it is usually called. In writing to Horace Walpole in old age he defends himself against the reproach of despising Shakspeare :—" I said, it is true, long ago, that if he had lived in the days of Addison he would have added to his genius that elegance and purity which make Addison admirable. I said that his genius was his own ; his faults those of his age. In my opinion he is precisely like Lopé de Vega and Calderon. *His genius is fine, but uncultivated* ; there is no regularity, no *bienséance*, no art ; he minglest grandeur with vulgarity, sublimity with buffoonery ; *he is the chaos of tragedy, in which there are a hundred gleams of light.*"

Idolators affirm that Shakspeare was a consummate artist ; they will not admit that he had faults. Voltaire may be excused for not being of this faith. And if we, surveying the dispute from higher ground, see that many of his criticisms are inadmissible, because they spring from principles which are inapplicable, we must, nevertheless, admit that, from his point of view, they were perfectly justified. Let us glance at the current of French opinion from the date of Voltaire's first mention of Shakspeare.

The introduction of the English poet was rapidly followed by an admiration which formed part of the then growing Anglomania. In 1769 the Théâtre Français—that temple of the classic stage—produced, and with great success, *Hamlet*, by Ducis. Probably but few of our readers have more than a second-hand acquaintance with this famous attempt to adapt Shakspeare to the French taste without any sacrifice of that taste. Ducis has been ridiculed and despised, not only in England and Germany, but also in France, by partisans of the *école romantique*. The ridicule is cheap ridicule ; the contempt springs from ignorance. The *Hamlet* and *Othello* of Ducis may excite amusement if considered as reproductions or representa-

tions of Shakspeare; but they were not meant to be so considered. They are French tragedies, for which Shakspeare supplied the elements. This is obvious from the opening scene. Perhaps in the whole range of the drama there is no finer exposition than the first act of *Hamlet*; but such an exposition would be impossible in the French style. Accordingly, Ducis opens with the entrance of Claudius, who says to Polonius,—

Oui, cher Polonius, tout mon parti n'aspire,
En détrônant Hamlet, qu'à m'assurer l'empire.
Ce prince, seul, farouche, à ses langueurs livré,
Aime à nourrir le fiel dont il est dévoré, &c.

We need not continue. Polonius is no longer the servile courtier we know, but an insipid confidant. He advises Claudius to beware of Hamlet—

Je connais trop cette âme et profonde et sensible;
Il cache un cœur de feu sous un dehors paisible.

Gertrude is repentant, and will not hear of Hamlet being dethroned, but urges Claudius to prove the sincerity of his remorse by espousing the cause of the son, whose father he murdered. And this is the whole of the first act—by no means a feeble act on the French system, but in striking contrast to the original, so tumultuous with various emotion.

In the second act Gertrude narrates to her confidant the story of her guilt. So little has the original been followed that the Ghost never once appears. Horatio (called Norceste) is told of Hamlet's approach, whose wild manner is described. Presently Hamlet is heard without, exclaiming,—

Fuis, spectre épouvantable!
Porte au fond des tombeaux ton aspect redoutable.

We have heard that Talma's entrance at this point produced a thrilling effect, his haggard look and agitated tones greatly moving the audience as he exclaimed,—

Eh quoi! vous ne le voyez pas?
Il vole sur ma tête, il s'attache à mes pas!
Je me meurs.

NORCESTE.
Revenez d'une erreur si funeste:
Ouvrez les yeux, seigneur, reconnaissiez Norceste, &c.

Hamlet then tells Norceste that he has twice in his sleep seen his father, who has revealed the crime of Claudius. Instead of the play to catch the conscience of the king, he proposes to narrate the story of the King of England, and thus,—

Emprunte à mes soupçons des rapports et des traits,
Qui contraignent leurs fronts à trahir leurs forfaits.

The Hamlet of Ducis is certainly not Shakspearian; nevertheless it is a good French play, and obtained unusual success. Other imitations followed, but all of them in the same style. Nor can this be surprising to any one who considers the temper of a French public, and the imperative necessity

laid upon a dramatist to adapt himself to the mental condition of his audience. The effect on an audience being instantaneous, with no time allowed for the correction of a first impression, the dramatist can rely on no reversal of any misapprehension by a calmer judgment. A reader may be startled, offended, puzzled; he may throw down the volume in disgust, or pause in his progress to reconsider first impressions ; the poem remains quietly awaiting his maturer verdict ; and if it remains to the last unappreciated by him, it wins the applause of other and better prepared readers. Not so the theatrical spectator ; he must be conquered at once. If his first impression is unfavourable he will yawn, or hiss. There is no breathing-time allowed for his panting impatience. Nay, even should he have been delighted with the four first acts, an unfortunate fifth act will draw down his condemnation of the whole. Such being the perils inevitable in representation, we may forgive the dramatist if he seem over-cautious in trying experiments on the public taste ; and we may thus understand why Ducis was afraid to exhibit Iago's villainy in the progress of the action, and had recourse to the safer, though feebler, expedient of *unmasking* him at the close. It was not that Ducis was insensible to the dramatic vigour of Shakspeare's Iago ; he declares in his preface, that it is drawn with extraordinary force. "Avec quelle souplesse effrayante, sous combien de formes trompeuses, ce serpent caresse et séduit le généreux et trop confiant Othello !" But this admiration was no assurance that a French public would tolerate such a character. "I am firmly persuaded," he says, "that if the English can tranquilly witness the machinations of this monster, the French would never for a moment suffer his presence on the stage, much less allow him to exhibit all the depth and extent of his villainy." The dramatists of our day have shown that a Parisian audience can tolerate and applaud characters far surpassing Iago in crime and perversity ; but when Ducis wrote, the sensibilities of the public were more delicate, as we may gather not only from his caution, but from the extraordinary effect produced by the dénouement of *Othello*. "Never," he says, "was there a more terrible impression. The whole audience rose, and gave vent to a cry of anguish : several women fainted." We take these things more quietly in England.

Was the timidity of Ducis excessive ? It is difficult to say ; all we know is, that fifty years afterwards, and when the French stage had undergone profound modifications, when the rebellion of the Romanticists and the drama of Dumas had tried and modified the temper of audiences, Alfred de Vigny produced his version of *Othello*, and we learn from an article written at the time by the Duc de Broglie, and reprinted in Guizot's work on Shakspeare, that the character of Iago was only saved from condemnation by the excellence of the actor. "A la scène il nous a paru déplaire généralement ; déplaire d'une manière très-prononcée et qui allait croissant d'acte en acte." The grounds of the disapprobation were various ; but the general opinions seemed to be that Iago was too wicked.

The success of Ducus naturally stimulated cultivated Frenchmen to become better acquainted with Shakspeare. Voltaire became alarmed for *le bon goût*, which was thus threatened. Signs of the coming revolution everywhere multiplied. Mercier had by precept and example openly attacked the classic drama. *Werther* was agitating France, as it had agitated all Europe. And to crown all, a translation of Shakspeare was announced by Letourneur, to which even royal personages had subscribed. This was touching Voltaire in a tender place: as a man of taste he was irritated by what he could only regard in the light of a dangerous heresy; as a dramatist he was threatened by onslaughts on the very system to which he owed his glory. His anger breaks out in ridiculous vehemence. He calls Letourneur "*un misérable*," "*un impudent imbécile*," and even "*un faquin*." His correspondence, always piquant and amusing, becomes especially amusing whenever Shakspeare or Letourneur is mentioned. "Have you read the two volumes by that creature" [the creature is the translator], "in which he wishes us to accept Shakspeare as the sole model of true tragedy? He calls him the god of the stage!" To Voltaire, who had private views as to one Arouet's claim to be the true model of tragedy, this was certainly irritating; his ill-humour betrays itself in the next sentence. "To his idol he sacrifices all the French without exception" [not even excepting Arouet!], "as in days of yore they sacrificed pigs to Ceres!" He appeals to the patriotism of his correspondent: "Do you not feel intense hate towards this impudent idiot? Will you sit down under such an *afront to France*?" And then remorse comes over him: "The horrible part of it is that the monster has followers in France; and as the crown of this calamity and horror, I it was who first mentioned Shakspeare; I it was who showed France the pearls I had found on this enormous dungheap. Little did I think that I should one day help to trample on the crowns of Racine and Corneille, and to ornament with them the brows of a barbarian player." We have already expounded what were Voltaire's real opinions respecting Shakspeare, and may therefore continue to quote these sallies of wrath without leading to a misconception. "The abomination of desecration is in the Temple," he writes. "Lekain, who is as angry as you are, tells me that almost all the young men in Paris are for Letourneur. I have seen the end of the reign of reason and good taste. I shall die, leaving France barbarian."

Those who remember the language in which Goethe, Kant, and "the Germans" were spoken of not long ago by many English writers, who looked upon the introduction of German literature as a new irruption of barbarians, will not be surprised at Voltaire's anger. After hearing Goethe's "drivel," "sickly sentimentalism," "sensuality," and "immorality," proclaimed by guardians of "manly English taste;" after learning from the highest authorities that the author of *Wilhelm Meister* was "not a gentleman," and that Kant was a "dreamer" and an "atheist," we may with tolerable patience hear Voltaire's declaration that Shakspeare was a "miserable ape" and a "drunkard." He went so far in his anger

as to say, "It is impossible that any man not absolutely mad could in cool judgment prefer such a Gilles as Shakspeare to Corneille and Racine. Such an infamous opinion could only spring from sordid avarice, eager for *subscriptions*."

The coming revolution could not be arrested by sarcasms. German and English literature slowly penetrated France, and slowly modified French taste. The very fierceness of the opposition kept alive the public interest. La Harpe could speak of Kant and Swedenborg as minds of the same class, "the opprobrium of human intellect" (*l'opprobre de l'esprit humain*), and Chénier could say of Goethe, "All that can be mentioned in his praise is—that he ventured to imitate Racine and Voltaire; which for a German is saying much." Judgments like these are quickly reversed. Curious minds were not to be withheld from inquiring into the actual merits of Shakspeare and Goethe; and it was easy for them to show France that the conservative critics were utterly ignorant of the writers they condemned. Slowly but steadily French culture widened; and now every one admits that in the drama, as in all other arts, widely differing forms may be equally admirable, and that a Gothic cathedral may fitly rival a Greek temple.

The gravest and most authoritative expression of the change in public opinion respecting Shakspeare is to be read in Guizot's remarkable "Life," prefixed in 1821 to a revised edition of Letourneur's translation, and since republished in a separate volume. He tells us that there was a time when Voltaire's praise of Shakspeare was considered excessive, and men "refused to profane the words genius and glory by applying them to works so barbarous;" but that now-a-days "there is no longer any question about the genius and the glory, which are uncontested, the only dispute is whether Shakspeare's system is better than Voltaire's." In his general remarks on this subject Guizot writes like a philosopher who has meditated seriously, and he frequently expresses, with the luminous precision which belongs to him, the results of modern criticism. But it is the philosopher, not the dramatic critic, that we listen to. On all points specially affecting the drama as an art, distinguishable from the drama as literature, he speaks with the vagueness, and sometimes with the unapprehensiveness inevitable in one treating of an art which he has not himself practised, or studied as an art. He observes, on the general question, that "if the Romantic system (in which the English drama is included) has its beauties, it has necessarily its art and its rules. Everything which men acknowledge as beautiful in art, owes its effect to certain combinations, of which our reason can detect the secret when our emotions have attested its power. The science, or the employment of these combinations, constitutes what we call art. Shakspeare had his own. We must detect it in his works, and examine the means he employs, and the results he aims at." Admirably said; unhappily M. Guizot was not sufficiently familiar with the exigencies and powers of dramatic combinations to detect this secret. He remarks that Shakspeare "excels in the subject-

matter, but sins in the form; he places with great vigour on the stage the instincts, passions, ideas, the whole inward life of men, and is the profoundest and most dramatic of moralists; but he makes his persons speak a language often strange, far-fetched, excessive, wanting in sobriety and nature." This is the kind of criticism which, whether correct or incorrect, lends no illumination to dramatic art; and it is the kind of criticism which passes generally current, taking the shape of vague eulogy and vague blame, instead of direct analysis of the poet's *means* in reference to his *aims*.

Shakspeare-idolators will find no want of cordial admiration in Guizot's pages. He has been profoundly impressed with the greatness and prodigality of the poet's genius, and expresses himself mildly and modestly on such defects as force themselves on his notice. Like most writers on this theme, he sees in all defects only the excesses of a merit. "Un malheur est arrivé à Shakspeare; prodigue de ses richesses, il n'a pas toujours su les distribuer à propos ni avec art." It is the crowding of tumultuous ideas which confuse him, and "he has not the courage to treat them with a prudent severity." This is true of many defective passages, but there are many more which carry with them no such glorious excuse. That Guizot should offer such an excuse, and at the same time assign it as the excuse for errors in Corneille, is significant of the change which had come over the condition of criticism in France since the days of Voltaire, when the defects of Shakspeare were regarded as evidences of a rude and barbarous state of art.

The date of Guizot's work is 1821. About the same time, M. de Barante published his critique on *Hamlet* (reprinted in his *Mélanges*), and adopted a more decidedly partisan tone. Significant as an historical indication, this essay has little merit in itself. It wants the integrity and candour which ought to preside over criticism. Surely the greatness of Shakspeare may dispense with sophistical eulogies? The admirer of Wilkes was not content with insisting on Wilkes's talents, but loudly affirmed that he did not squint more than a gentleman *ought* to squint. The admirers of Shakspeare are apt to display the same incoherent fervour; and after taxing their ingenuity to discover merit in details which offend all unprejudiced minds, they proceed to condemn similar or lesser faults in other writers with merciless severity. Shakspeare does not lose his rank as the greatest of poets because we find him sometimes erring like the smallest. But the genuineness of our admiration of his greatness becomes suspicious, when accompanied by an insensibility to his glaring defects. The *dénouement* of *Hamlet*, for example, may be quietly noticed as defective, without disturbing our sense of the singular power of that tragedy; but it is an insult to our understanding to hear it defended on the metaphysical grounds proposed by M. de Barante:—"Il était difficile de le dénouer puisqu'il n'avait pas de nœud, et que l'action marchait comme au hasard. Le doute a présidé à tout son ensemble, et pèse encore sur le dénouement." This is what passes, in

some circles, as profound criticism, "philosophical" criticism. It is assuredly not dramatic criticism.

In 1827, Villemain published his essay on Shakspeare. He keeps honestly aloof from nonsense and declamation. Although finely praising the genius, he is also found candidly admitting defects. "All the absurd improbabilities," he says, "all the buffooneries of which Shakspeare is so lavish, were common to the rude theatre which we possessed at the same era; it was the mark of the times; why should we now admire in Shakspeare the defects which are everywhere else buried in oblivion, and which have survived in the English poet only on account of the sublime traits of genius with which he has surrounded them?" He calls upon his countrymen to admire and enjoy the works without falling into the error of erecting them as models to be imitated by other dramatists. "Copied upon system," he says, "or timidly corrected, Shakspeare is worthless to imitators; when even in the energetic hands of Ducis he is reduced to the classical proportions and confined by the restrictions of our stage, he loses the liberty of his movement and all that is great and unexpected. The gigantic characters he invents have no longer room to move. His actions of terror, his large developments of passion, cannot be reduced within our limits. Do not restrain this giant in swaddling-clothes. Leave him his savage liberty. Do not clip this noble and redundant foliage as you clip the trees at Versailles." In these remarks, Villemain was tacitly reproving the Romantic school; nor was his sagacity wholly at fault in its estimation of French feeling, when he said that "Shakspeare belonged to England and ought to remain there." The temporary successes of the Romantic school may have seemed to prove him in error; but, as before stated, Shakspeare is still without a home on the French stage. Of Villemain, as of Guizot, it must be said that the absence of an intimate acquaintance with the *art*, renders his criticisms acceptable only in the light of literary judgments. In this respect, they are often excellent. Very well worth reading also are his remarks in the *Cours de Littérature*, in which he contrasts Voltaire with Shakspeare, pointing out not only the superiority of the English poet in depth and truth of passion, but even in *bon goûт*.

In spite of the eulogies of eminent and authoritative writers, aided by the more passionate advocacy of the Romanticists, Shakspeare was still excluded from the French stage. At length, in 1829, Alfred de Vigny ventured on the production of *Othello*. The interesting point in this experiment is not that it succeeded, but that its success was without results. Helped by the talents of Talma and Mdlle. Mars, it was played sixty nights. It has rarely, if ever, been reproduced. It led to no similar experiment with *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Lear*, *Romeo and Juliet*. This fact opens a large question for the meditations of a dramatic student; we cannot dwell upon it here.

Since 1829, the triumph of the revolutionary principles, and the noisy but vanishing successes of the Romantic school, have quite destroyed the

prejudices which for so long aided in excluding Shakspeare from France. There still, however, remain certain obstacles to his naturalization, especially on the stage. Two of these we may briefly mention. Without their poetry, the plays sink to the level of *drames*, and, as *drames*, most of them are surpassed in interest and construction by more modern works. In estimating the value of the one or two attempts which have been made since that of Alfred de Vigny, to present Shakspeare before the French public, we should remember the difficulties of the translators and the inevitable disappointment of the public. Imagine *Faust* played to an English audience in an English version, and ask what would be the unbiased judgment of a public which fancied itself listening to the greatest poem of modern times? Some such result necessarily follows when Shakspeare's large and magnificent style is reproduced in the meagre diction and artificial rhythm of French *Alexandrines*.

M. Emile Deschamps produced a version of *Macbeth* in 1848. It was a work of talent and great pains; but a passage or two will suffice to show that the French public listened to language very unlike the original.

I have almost forgot the taste of fears;
The time has been my senses would have cooled
To hear a night-shriek; and my fell of hair
Would at a dismal treatise rouse and stir
As life were in't. I have supped full of horrors.
Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,
Cannot once start me.

Does any one suppose that the sensibilities of an audience could be equally roused by a version like the following?—

Ah! j'ai presque oublié ce que c'est que la crainte.
Eh bien! j'ai vu le temps où, d'une terreur sainte,
Mon cœur se fût glacé par des cris dans la nuit;
Ou si de quelque meurtre on répandait le bruit,
Mes cheveux sur mon front se dressaient d'épouvante,
Et s'agitaient, ainsi qu'une forêt vivante!
Maintenant, les horreurs, les fléaux, par milliers
Fondent sur mon chemin, avec moi familiers,
Et je me marche entouré comme de mon escorte.

One cannot deny that, considered as a translation, this is cleverly executed; nor can one deny that in translation all that is exquisite in the original disappears. Again, the touching and Shakspearian lines—

To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

There is no one who has heard these lines, even when mouted in a barn, but will remember their effect upon his mind ; let him endeavour to estimate a Frenchman's emotion on hearing these :—

Ainsi demain, demain encore, puis un autre
 S'avancent vers le gouffre; et tous nos jours passés
 N'auront fait qu'éclairer de tristes incensés
 Sur la route qui mène où tout s'abîme ensemble !
 Ah ! la vie est une ombre errante ! — elle ressemble
 Au pauvre comédien qu'on voit gesticuler,
 Crier une heure . . . et dont on n'entend plus parler !

It is unnecessary to multiply examples—the reader sees at once that such presentations of a poet must inevitably be disappointing ; and they enable us to understand one of the causes why Shakspeare has failed to secure a permanent place in the French repertory. A precisely similar cause excludes Molière from the English stage. There is no one competent to form an opinion who does not recognize the exquisite genius of Molière and the unsurpassed art which his masterpieces display ; yet the impossibility of adequately presenting them in English, shuts them from our stage repertory.

Considering that none of Shakspeare's plays are acted as he wrote them, and that it is only of late years that we have rejected the manipulations of Garrick and Cibber, it would ill become us to upbraid the French for their alterations and improvements, singular as these may sometimes appear. It is certain that Shakspeare's arrangement is often defective ; and yet those who undertake to improve it make sad bungles. Goethe's alterations of *Romeo and Juliet*, and Schiller's of *Macbeth*, are surprising instances of such failure. What shall we say to M. Deschamps when he improves the *dénouement* of *Macbeth* by making Macbeth and Macduff both fall mortally wounded, and conclude the scene thus ?—

MACDUFF, montrant *Macbeth* à Malcolm.
 Je meurs . . . il va mourir; salut, roi ! car vous l'êtes !
 La paix enfin jaillit du choc des deux athlètes . . .
 Mes fils, je vous rejoins !

[Il expire.]

MALCOLM, penché sur son corps.
 Ah ! j'en jure par toi,
 L'Ecosse renâtra, libre enfin, sous son roi !
 [De sombres nuages ont couvert l'horizon, et les sorcières
 apparaissent sur les rochers de la citadelle, des torches à
 la main.]

MACBETH, se soulevant un peu avant de mourir.
 Malcolm, tu vas régner ! c'est juste ! mais regarde !
 Oui ! voilà les trois sœurs qui m'ont perdu. Prends garde
 A leurs conseils maudits, et songe à mon adieu !
 [Il meurt. Eclat de rires des sorcières.]

MALCOLM.
 Amis, vive l'Ecosse, et ne croyons qu'en Dieu !

This was greatly admired by many critics, and it certainly gives a symmetry to the construction, besides "pointing a moral;" but in England we are not likely to accept it as a poetic improvement. Shakespeare, we think, knew best how to deal with his supernatural agencies; and it would probably never have occurred to him to make his witches stultify themselves by so gratuitous an exhibition of the evil results of following their inspirations.

Still more astonishing are the improvements upon which Alexandre Dumas ventured in his version of *Hamlet*. Of the poverty and commonplace of his translation we say nothing, but his alteration of the *dénouement* calls for remark, because it was loudly applauded by many journalists as being "so logical." Shakspeare's *dénouement* is bad enough, one must confess—so bad as to justify even a reverent hand in rearranging it; but there is at any rate no glaring inconsistency between it and all that has preceded it; whereas in the "logical" arrangement of Dumas the whole piece is rendered inconsistent. Instead of killing Laertes in the duel, and then the King, Hamlet calls upon the Ghost, whom he exhibits to their guilty gaze. Laertes appeals to the Ghost for pardon.

L'OMBRE.

Oui, ton sang trop prompt t'entraîna vers l'abîme,
Laërté, et le seigneur t'a puni pour ton crime ;
Mais tu le trouveras, car il sonde les coeurs,
Moins sévère là haut. Laërté, prie, et meurs. [Laërté meurt.

The Queen implores pardon, and the Ghost—a truly French ghost of the nineteenth century—tells her, that her crime, having been dictated by love, will be pardoned :

Va, ton cœur a lavé ta honte avec tes pleurs,
Femme ici, reine au ciel, Gertrude, espère et meurs. [Gertrude meurt.

LE ROI.

Pardon !

L'OMBRE.

Pas de pardon ! va, meurtrier infame,
Va, pour ton crime affreux, dans leurs cercles de flamme.
Satan et les enfers n'ont pas trop de douleurs ;
Va, traître incestueux, va, desespère et meurs. [Le Roi meurt.

Love, it seems, is an excuse in a woman, but not in the man who is her accomplice. Waiving that, let us ask how it is that the Ghost, thus shown to be capable of breathing away the souls of Laertes, the King, and Queen, assuring each of the awaiting judgment, has all through the piece been condemned to wander nightly in great perturbation because his murderer was unavenged ? Why did he goad on his sceptical son to avenge him when he could have so easily avenged himself ?

If we are to be "*logique*," such questions must arise. Dumas has,

however, a higher logic; and having taken Shakspeare in hand, shows us how this logic improves the *dénouement*. Hamlet left thus alone with his father's ghost, asks him:—

Et moi, vais-je rester, triste orphelin sur terre
 A respirer cet air imprégné de misère ?
 Tragédien choisi par le courroux de Dieu,
 Si j'ai mal pris mon rôle et mal saisi mon jeu ;
 Si tremblant de mon œuvre et lasse sans combattre
 Pour un que tu voulais j'en ai fait mourir quatre,
 O ! parle, est-ce que Dieu ne pardonnera pas,
 Père, et quel châtiment m'attend donc ?

L'OMBRE.

Tu vivras

This is the sort of epigram to throw some men into ecstasies. Its quality as a Shakspearian trait we need not criticize.

The question more or less confusedly originated by Voltaire,—How far is Shakspeare acceptable as a model of dramatic art?—still remains unanswered by France very much in the sense of Voltaire. A century of discussion and of change has enlarged the ideal of art, and has broken down the pedantic barriers which confined the poet's movement within narrow limits; Aristotle and the “rules” are no longer despotic; consequently we now see the operation of deeper and more permanent causes. If France has not naturalized Shakspeare, it is not from prejudice and pedantry, but from reasons similar to those which prevent Molière, Racine, Corneille, Goethe, Schiller, Calderon, and Alfieri, from becoming naturalized in England. Observe, however, that just as Goethe is studied in England, Shakspeare is studied in France: studied, but not acted; accepted as a poet, not as a dramatist.

To aid in the more general diffusion of this study, and to place a large amount of Shakspearian literature within easy access for the French public, comes the translation by François Victor Hugo, begun in 1859 and already in its twelfth volume. A more creditable undertaking has seldom been carried out with equal success. There are many faults to find in the execution, but we cordially and gratefully acknowledge the talent and the pains bestowed on it. Not content with giving a line-for-line translation in prose with all the fidelity which the disparity of the two languages admitted, M. François Hugo has helped the student by translating from chronicles, stories, and poems, all those passages which Shakspeare is known or supposed to have used as his sources. He has also added long historical and critical introductions to the plays. We know not what French readers may say to these; in our country they will be regarded as somewhat too journalistic for so grave a work. When M. Hugo gives *in extenso* a translation of the first *Hamlet* as well as the second and matured play, or when he translates the novels of Cinthio and Bandello, from which Shakspeare drew his plots, real aid is given to the student. But when he writes an ambitious essay on the “conceptions of

the invisible" which were general in Shakspeare's day, and stranslate Shelley's *Queen Mab* to illustrate it, one feels that the picture would have been better had the painter taken *less* pains. Throughout this otherwise praiseworthy undertaking there is too conspicuous an attempt to make "le grand Will" a peg whereon to hang rags of rhetoric and historical surveys. We will cite but one example. He tells us that the baptismal register of Stratford-on-Avon bears the name of Shakspeare's son, and that is the strange name of Hamlet. "Must we see in this choice," he asks, "a proof of the admiration which Shakspeare, deeply moved by the narrative of Belleforest, already felt for the future hero of his drama ? or must we suppose that in placing his child under the invocation of the Danish Brutus (*sous l'invocation du Brutus danois*) William had a still more tragic thought ? Oppressed by his own misery and the misery of his family, crushed beneath the weight of social tyranny, sick of existence, thinking perhaps of suicide, did William wish by this baptism to bequeath to the son that should survive him a sort of mission of vengeance ? These are questions which escape human research, and of which the immortal soul of the poet has carried away the secret." *Risum teneatis amici?* Such a passage is typical. When we know that the writer is the son of Victor Hugo, we recognize in it the son of his father. The amusing part of the nonsense is that this tirade is founded on an initial carelessness. Shakspeare did *not* christen his son "Hamlet," but "Hamnet," which was the name of the child's god-father. Rhetoric cannot attend to the fastidious demands of accuracy ; but an editor of Shakspeare might look twice at a name before speculating on its significance.

Of M. François Hugo's translation, only Frenchmen well acquainted with English poetry can fitly judge. An Englishman may recognize its general fidelity, but he cannot decide on its felicity ; he cannot appreciate how far the magic of style reappears in the translation. For example, the beautiful and simple words—

In such a night as this
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,
And they did make no noise—

are correctly translated by, "Dans une nuit parcellé à celle-ci, tandis que le suave zéphyr bâsait doucement les arbres sans qu'ils fissent du bruit ;" but are they adequately represented in this version ? and can French prose come nearer ? These questions few Englishmen will venture to answer. We, certainly, shall not attempt it. It is enough for us to remark that, wherever we have compared the original with the translation, we have found M. Hugo displaying a rare mas'ery and a scrupulous accuracy.

The publishers of this translation announced, as a great attraction, that it would be introduced by a volume written by the translator's celebrated father. "The author of *Hamlet* commented on by the author of

Ruy Blas" might indeed be reckoned as an attraction. The bulky volume, *William Shakspeare, par Victor Hugo*, has not, however, brought much illumination either to dramatic literature or to the state of opinion in France. It is an immense rhapsody, for which the English poet is merely a pretext. As a rhapsody, it has a certain grandiose eloquence, but we are forced to add that it contains little thought and much grandiose nonsense. As a display of intellectual fireworks it is prodigious. But after the eye has been dazzled with the rushing, leaping, sputtering fire of its imagery, epigram, paradox, and declamation, the understanding recognizes little but clouds of smoke and bits of dirty paper. Lovers of fine phrases, and admirers of the "big brush" may be delighted with its abundant and often felicitous imagery, its unexpected combinations, and its sham sublimities. But thoughtful readers will turn impatiently away from its emptiness and bombast; critical students of Shakspeare will be amazed at its carelessness and ignorance. Every now and then impatience is checked by meeting with a description or an image which reminds us that it is a man of genius who is speaking. For example, how grandly he says of Æschylus that he has "jusqu'aux épaules la cendre des siècles, il n'a que la tête hors de cet ensouissement, et, comme ce colosse des solitudes, avec sa tête seule, il est aussi grand que tous les dieux voisins debout sur leurs piédestaux." This is a poem in four lines. Though not irreproachable, the passage on Job is also poetic:—"Job commence le drame, et il y a quarante siècles de cela, par la mise en présence de Jéhovah et de Satan ; le mal déifie le bien, et voilà l'action engagée. La terre est le lieu de la scène, et l'homme est le champ de bataille ; les fléaux sont les personnages. Une des plus sauvages grandeurs de ce poème, c'est que le soleil y est sinistre." [This is the Hugo sublime.] "Le soleil est dans Job comme dans Homère, mais ce n'est plus l'aube, c'est le midi. Le lugubre accablement du rayon d'airain tombant à pic sur le désert emplit ce poème chauffé à blanc. Job est en sueur sur son fumier. L'ombre de Job est petite et noire et cachée sous lui comme la vipère sous le rocher. . . . Tout le poème de Job est le développement de cette idée : la grandeur qu'on trouve au fond de l'abîme. Job est plus majestueux misérable que prospère. *Sa lèvre est un pourpre.*"

With due allowance for such occasional felicities, we must still pronounce the work a melancholy mistake. Its swelling ambition irritates and wearies. As a poet and a dramatist Victor Hugo might be expected to have something better to say than such sham profundities as, "L'infini est une exactitude ;" or as the following :—

Le nombre se révèle à l'art par le rythme, qui est le battement du cœur de l'infini.
Dans le rythme, loi de l'ordre, on sent Dieu.

La multiplication des lecteurs, c'est la multiplication des pains. Le jour où le Christ a créé ce symbole, il a entrevu l'imprimerie. Son miracle c'est ce prodige. Dans Christ faisant éclorer les pains il y a Guttenberg faisant éclorer les livres. Un sémeur annonce l'autre.

One or two specimens of his elucidations of Shakspeare are all that we can spare room for. "To say that Macbeth is ambition, is saying nothing. Macbeth is hunger. What hunger? The hunger of the monster always possible in man. There are souls which have teeth. Do not awake this hunger." If Macbeth is Hunger, Othello, we learn is, Night. "Immense fatale figure. La nuit est amoureuse du jour. La noirceur aime l'aurore. L'Africain adore la blanche." Beside this Night stands Iago, who is Evil. "Night is but the night of the world; evil is the night of the soul. What obscurity there is in perfidy and falsehood!" What follows is untranslatable: "Quiconque a coudoyé l'imposture et le parjure le sait : on est à tâtons dans un fourbe. Versez l'hypocrisie sur le point du jour vous éteindrez le soleil. C'est là, grâce aux fausses religions, ce qui arrive à Dieu." French rhetoric cannot get on without "Dieu," and Victor Hugo is very French, and very rhetorical. As a final specimen consider this :

Sondez cette chose profonde, Othello, c'est la nuit. Et étant la nuit, et voulant tuer, qu'est-ce qu'il prend pour tuer ? le poison ? la massue ? la hache ? le couteau ? Non, l'oreiller. Tuer, c'est endormir. Shakspeare lui-même ne s'est peut-être pas rendu compte de ceci.

The last touch is exquisite.

In only one sense can this extraordinary book be taken as an indication of French opinion, namely, as showing the hyperbolical admiration which an eminent French poet can express for a dramatist once deemed unworthy of the epithets "genius," and "glory." The most illustrious of living dramatists in France proclaims Shakspeare the greatest of all dramatists. Such has been the change from Voltaire to Victor Hugo !

G. H. L.

Oyster Farming.

THE most noteworthy circumstance connected with the art of fish culture is the attention which is at present bestowed on oyster-breeding on the foreshores of France. On many parts of the coast, and particularly at the Ile de Ré, near la Rochelle, thousands of oyster farms have recently started into existence, affording remunerative employment to a large population, who thus provide, and at a comparatively cheap rate, one of the most esteemed luxuries of the table.

It is hardly an exaggeration to say that about fifteen years ago there was scarcely an oyster of native growth in France; the beds had become so exhausted from over-dredging as to be unproductive, and the people were consequently in despair at the loss of this favourite adjunct of their banquets, and had to resort to other countries for such small supplies as they could obtain. As an illustration of the over-dredging that had prevailed, it may be stated that oyster farms which formerly employed fourteen hundred men, with two hundred boats, and yielded an annual revenue of 400,000 francs, had become so reduced as to require only one hundred men and twenty boats. Places where at one time there had been as many as fifteen banks and great prosperity among the fisher class, at the period we allude to had become almost oysterless. St. Brieuc, Rochelle, Marennes, Rochefort, &c., had all suffered so much that those interested in the fisheries were no longer able to stock their beds, thus proving that notwithstanding the enormous fecundity of these sea animals, it is quite possible to overfish them. It was under these circumstances that M. Coste instituted that plan of oyster culture which has been so much noticed of late in the scientific journals. At the instigation of the French Government, the professor made a voyage of exploration round the coasts of France and Italy, in order to inquire into the condition of the sea fisheries which were, it was thought, in a declining condition, and study how they could be aided by artificial means, as the fresh-water fisheries had already been aided through the re-discovery, by Joseph Renny, of the long-forgotten art of pisciculture.

We presume, indeed we know, that it is to the ancient industry carried on in the lake of Fusaro, a piece of water in the bay of Naples, that M. Coste was indebted for his inspiration in the matter of oyster culture, for the art of cultivating this mollusc is still carried on in that classic locality. The breeding of oysters was a business pursued with great assiduity during what may, without impropriety, be called the gastronomic age of Italy—the period when Lucullus kept a stock of fish valued

at fifty thousand pounds sterling, and Sergius Orata invented the art of oyster culture. There is not a great deal known about this ancient gentleman, except that it is pretty certain he was an epicure of most refined taste: the "master of luxury" he was called. While standing his trial for using the public waters of Lake Lucrinus for his own private uses, his advocate Lucinus Crassus said that the revenue officer who prosecuted Orata was mistaken if he thought that gentleman would dispense with his oysters, even if he was driven from the Lake of Lucrinus; for rather than not enjoy his accustomed luxury, he would grow them on the tops of his houses!

Lake Fusaro, interesting as the first seat of oyster culture, is the Acheron of Virgil. It is a black volcanic-looking pool of water, about a league in circumference, which lies between the site of the Lucrine lake used by Orata and the ruins of the town of Cumæ, and is still extant, being even now, as we have said, devoted to the highly profitable art of oyster farming, and yielding (by report) from this source an annual revenue of about twelve hundred pounds. This classic sheet of water was at one time surrounded by the villas of wealthy Romans, who frequented the place for the joint benefit of the sea-water baths and the shell-fish commissariat which had been established in the two lakes (Avernus and Lucrine). The mode of oyster-breeding at this place, then, as now, was to erect artificial pyramids of stones in the water, surrounded by stakes of wood in order to intercept the spawn, the oysters being laid down on the stones. Faggots of branches were also used for collecting the spawn, which requires, within twenty-four hours of its emission, to secure a speedy holding-on-place, or be lost for ever. The plan of the Fusaro oyster-breeders struck M. Coste as being eminently practical and suitable for imitation. He had one of the stakes pulled up, and was gratified to find it covered with oysters of all ages and sizes.

It is not our purpose in the present paper to enter into the minutiae of oyster life; indeed, there have been so many controversies on the natural history of this animal, as to render it impossible to narrate in the brief space of a popular Magazine a tenth part of what is known of the life and habits of the "breedy creature." Every stage of its growth has been made the stand-point for a wrangle of some kind. It has been disputed whether or not oysters are male and female, like other animals; it has been made a matter of controversy on which of its shells it rests, the concave or the flat one; whether it emits a sound, whether it has any mode of progressing from place to place, how long it is of growing, and when it becomes reproductive. We wish, however, to say this much about the oyster's natural history, namely, that the immense fecundity of the animal is largely detracted from by bad breeding seasons, for unless the spawning season be mild and warm, there is but a very partial fall of *spat*, and a consequent scarcity of brood. And even if one be the proprietor of a large bed of oysters, there is no security for the spawn which is emitted from the oysters of that bed falling upon it, or within the

bounds of one's own property even, for it is often enough the case that the spawn falls at a considerable distance from the place where it has been emitted. Thus, the spawn from the Whitstable and Faversham Oyster Company's beds—and these contain millions of oysters—falls usually enough on a large piece of ground between Whitstable and the Isle of Thanet, formerly common property, but lately given by Act of Parliament to a company recently formed for the breeding of oysters. The saving of the spawn cannot be effected unless it fall on proper ground, and ground with a shelly bottom is best. The infant animal is sure to perish if it fall among mud or upon sand; it *must* obtain a holding-on-place as the first condition of its own existence. The spawn of the oyster is well matured before it leaves the protection of the parental shell, and, by the aid of the microscope, the young animal can be seen with its shells perfect, and its holding-on apparatus, which is also a kind of swimming-pad, ready to clutch the first coigne of vantage that the current may carry it against. The parent oyster goes on "brewing" its spawn for some time; and it is supposed that the spawn swims about with the current for a short period before it falls, being, in the meantime, devoured by countless animals. If each oyster yields, as is thought, about a couple of millions of young, we should say that the operation of brewing, nursing, and exuding from the parental shell will occupy a considerable period—say, from two to four weeks. It is quite certain that the close time for oysters is necessary and advantageous; for we seldom find this animal, as we do the herring and other fishes, full of eggs, so that all the operations connected with its reproduction go on in the months during which there is no dredging. The time at which the oyster becomes reproductive is not known with any exactitude; but in these days of oyster farming the date may be easily fixed, and it will, no doubt, be found to vary in different localities. At some places it becomes marketable in the course of little more than two years, at other places it is three or four years before it becomes a saleable commodity; but on the average it will be quite safe to assume that at four years the oyster is both ripe for sale and reproductive of its kind.

We may just state, before going further, that the best mode of securing the spawn of the oyster has not been determined. M. Coste recommends the adoption of fascines of brushwood to be fixed over the natural oyster-beds, in order to intercept the young ones; others again, as we shall by and by see, have adopted the parks, and have successfully caught the spawn on dikes constructed for that purpose; but Dr. Kemmerer, of St. Martin's, in the Ile de Ré, has invented a tile which he covers with some kind of composition that can as occasion requires be easily peeled off, so that the crop of oysters which may be gathered upon it can be transferred from place to place with the greatest possible ease, and this plan is useful for the transference of the oyster from the collecting park to the fattening claire. The composition and the adhering oysters may all be stripped off in one piece, and the tile be again coated for future use. Hitherto these tiles have been

very successful, although it is thought, by experienced cultivators, that no bottom for oysters is so good as the natural one of "cultch," or old oyster shells; but the tile is often of service in catching the "floatsome," as dredgers call the spawn, and to secure that should be one of the first objects of the oyster farmer.

The system of cultivation that had been so long and successfully carried on at Lake Fusaro was, with one or two slight modifications, strongly recommended by the French Government to the people as being the most suitable to follow, and experiments were at once entered upon with a view to prove whether it would be as practicable to cultivate oysters among the agitated waves of the open sea as in the quiet waters of Fusaro. In order to settle this point, it was determined to renew the old oyster beds of the Bay of St. Brieuc, and immediate, almost miraculous, success was the result. The fascines laid down soon became covered with spat, and branches were speedily exhibited at Paris and other places containing thousands of young oysters. The experiments in oyster culture tried at St. Brieuc were commenced, early in the spring of 1859, on part of a space of three thousand acres. A quantity of breeding oysters, approaching to three millions, was laid down either on the old beds or on newly constructed longitudinal banks; these were sown thick on a bottom composed chiefly of immense quantities of old shells, the "middens" of Cancale in fact, where the shell accumulations had become a nuisance, so that there was a more than ordinary good chance for the spat finding at once a proper holding-on-place. Then again, over some of the new banks, fascines of boughs were sunk and chained over the beds so as to intercept any portion of the spawn that was likely upon its rising to be carried away by the force of the tide. In less than six months the success of the operations in the Bay of St. Brieuc was assured, for at the proper season a great fall of spawn had occurred, and the bottom shells were covered with the spat, while the fascines were so thickly coated with young oysters that an estimate of 20,000 for each fascine was not thought an exaggeration.

But, a year before the date of the St. Brieuc experiments, the artificial culture of the oyster had been successfully commenced on another part of the French coast, namely, at the Ile de Ré near la Rochelle, in the Bay of Biscay, which is now the capital of French oysterdom, having more parcs and claires than Marennes, Arcachon, Concarneau, Cancale, or all the rest of the coast put together, and which, before it became celebrated for its oyster growing, was only known in common with many other places in France for its successful culture of the vine. It is curious to note the rapid growth of this industry on the Ile de Ré; it was begun so recently as 1858, and there are now, according to Mr. Ashworth, who has obligingly communicated to us his census, taken a few months ago, upwards of four thousand parks and claires upon its shores. It was inaugurated by a stonemason, having the curious name of Beef. This shrewd fellow had been thinking of oyster culture simultaneously with

Professor Coste, and wondering if it could be carried on on those portions of the public foreshore that were left dry by the ebb of the waters. He determined to try the experiment on a small scale so as to obtain a practical solution of his "idea," and with this view he enclosed a small portion of the foreshore by building a rough dike about eighteen inches in height, and in this park he laid down a few bushels of oysters, placing amongst them a quantity of large stones which he gathered out of the surrounding mud. His initiatory experiment was so successful, that, in the course of a year, he was able to sell 6*l.* worth of oysters from his park. This result was of course very encouraging to the enterprising mason, especially as the oysters went on growing while he was at work at his own proper business. Elated by the profit of his experiment, he proceeded at once to double the size of his park, and by that means more than doubled his commerce, for in 1861 he was able to dispose of upwards of 20*l.* worth of his oysters, and that without impoverishing in the least degree his breeding stock. He still continued to increase the dimensions of his park, so that by 1862 his sales had increased to 40*l.* As might have been expected, Beef's neighbours had been carefully watching his experiments, uttering occasional sneers no doubt at his enthusiasm; but, for all that, quite ready to go and do likewise whenever the success of the industrious mason's experiments became sufficiently developed to show that they were profitable. After Beef had demonstrated the practicability of oyster farming, the extension of the system all over the foreshores of the island was rapid and effective, so much so that two hundred beds were conceded previous to 1859, while an additional five hundred beds were speedily laid down, and in 1860 large quantities of brood were sold to the oyster farmers of Marennes for the purpose of being manufactured into green oysters in their claires on the banks of the Seudre. The first sales, after cultivation had become general, amounted to 126*l.* In the season of 1860-61, the oysters sold brought the sum of 321*l.*, and next season the sum reached in sales was upwards of 500*l.*; and these moneys, be it observed, were for very young oysters, because, from an examination of the dates, it will at once be seen that the brood had not had time to grow to any great size. So rapid indeed has been the progress of oyster culture at the Ile de Ré that its foreshores, which were formerly a series of enormous and unproductive mud banks, are now covered with parks and claires. There is only one drawback to these and all other sea-farms in France: the farmers, we regret to say, are only "tenants at will," and liable at any moment to be ejected; but, notwithstanding this disadvantage, the work of oyster culture has gone bravely forward, and it is calculated, in spite of the bad spatting of the last three years, that there is a stock of oysters in the beds—accumulated in only six years—of the value of upwards of 100,000*l.*, which in another year or so will be doubled!

The reader is not, however, to suppose but that much hard work had to be endured before such a scene of industry could be thoroughly

organized. When the great success of Beef's experiments had been proclaimed in the neighbourhood, a little army of agricultural labourers came down from the interior of the country and took possession of the shores, portions of which were conceded to them by the French Government at a nominal rent of about a franc a week. The most arduous duty of these men consisted in clearing off the mud which lay on the shore in large quantities, and which is fatal to the oyster in its early stages. Next, the rocks had to be blasted in order to get stones for the construction of the park walls; then these had to be built; foot-roads had also to be arranged for the convenience of the farmers, and carriage-ways had likewise to be made through the different farms. Ditches had to be contrived to carry off the mud, the parks had to be stocked with breeding oysters, and to be kept carefully free from the various kinds of sea animals that prey upon the oyster, and many other daily duties had to be performed that demanded the minute attention of the owners. But all obstacles were in time overcome, and some of the breeders have been so very successful of late years as to be offered a sum of 100*l.* for the brood attached to twelve of their rows of stones, the cost of laying these down being about 200 francs!

The following are authentic statistics of the oyster industry of the Island of Ré, when only in the fourth year of the venture :—

Parks for collecting Spawn and Breeding	2,424
Fattening Ponds (Claires)	839
Supposed Number of Oysters in Parks	74,242,038
Aggregate Number in the Claires	1,026,282
Revenue of the Parks	1,086,230 francs
Revenue of the Claires	40,015 "
Hectares of Ground in Parks and Claires	146
Proprietors of Beds	1,700

But more interesting even than the material success that has attended the introduction of this industry into the Island of Ré is the moral success that has accompanied the experiment. Excellent laws have been enacted, by the oyster farmers themselves, for the government of their peculiar industry. A kind of parliament has been devised for carrying on arguments as to oyster culture, and to enable the four communities into which the population has been divided to communicate to each other such information as may be found useful for the general good of all engaged in oyster farming. Three delegates from each of the communities are elected to conduct the general business, and to communicate with the Department of Marine when necessary. A small payment is made by each person, as a contribution to the general expense, whilst each division of the community employs a special watchman to guard the crops, and see that all goes on with propriety and good faith. Although each of the oyster farmers of Ré cultivates his park or claire for his own sole profit and advantage, he most willingly obeys those general laws that have been enacted for the good of the community.

One of the most lucrative branches of this foreign oyster farming may be now described, *i.e.* the production of the celebrated green oysters. The greening of oysters—many of which are bought from the Isle of Ré parks—is extensively carried on at Marennes on both sides of the river Seudre, and this particular branch of oyster industry has some features that are quite distinct from those we have been considering, as the green oyster is of considerably more value than the common white oyster. The peculiar colour and taste of the green oyster are imparted to it by the vegetable substances which grow in the beds where it is cultivated. This statement, however, is scarcely an answer to the question "why," or rather "how do oysters become green?" Some people maintain that the oyster green is a disease of the liver-complaint kind, while there are others who attribute the green colour to the presence of a parasite which overgrows the mollusc. But we think that the peculiar culture is in itself a very sufficient answer to the question. The industry carried on at Marennes consists chiefly of the fattening in claires, and the oysters are at one period of their lives as white as those of any other place; indeed it is only after being kept for a year or two in the muddy ponds of the river Seudre, that they attain the much-prized green hue. The enclosed ponds for the growth of these oysters, which according to all epicurean authority is, "*the oyster par excellence,*" require to be water-tight, for they are not submerged by the sea, except during very high tides. The walls for retaining the water require therefore to be very strong; they are composed of low but broad banks of earth, five or six yards thick at their base, and about three feet in height. The flood-gates for the admission of the tide require also to be thoroughly water-tight, and to fit with great precision, as the stock of oysters must always be kept covered with water. A trench or ditch is cut in the inside of each pond for the better collection of the green slime left at each flow of the tide, and many tidal inundations are necessary before the claire is ready for the reception of stock. When all these matters of construction and slime collecting have been attended to, the oysters are then scattered over it and left to fatten. When placed in these greening claires, they are usually from twelve to sixteen months old, and they must remain in them for a period of two years at least before they can be properly greened, and if left a year longer they are all the better; for we maintain that an oyster should be at least four years old before sent to table. Great attention must be devoted to the oysters while they are in the greening pond, and they must be occasionally shifted from one pond to another to ensure perfect success. Many of the oyster-farmers of Marennes have two or three claires suitable for this purpose of transfer. The trade in these green oysters is very large. Some of the breeders, or rather preparers of green oysters, anxious to be soon rich, content themselves with placing adult oysters only in their claires, and these become green in a very short time, and thus enable the operator to have several crops in a year, without very much trouble. The claires of Marennes, which occupy a large

area of land on both sides of the Seudre, furnish about fifty millions of oysters per annum, and these are sold at very remunerative prices, yielding an annual revenue approaching to two and a half millions of francs.

The oyster farmers of the river Seudre are also happy and prosperous, many of them having finer houses than they know how to use. The women not only share the prosperity of their husbands, but assist them in their lighter labours, such as separating and arranging the oysters previous to their being placed in the claires. It is also their duty to sell the oysters, and for this purpose they leave their homes about the end of August, and proceed to a particular town, there to wait and dispose of such quantities of shellfish as their husbands may forward to them. In this they resemble the fisherwomen of other countries. The Scottish fishwives do all the financial business connected with the trade carried on by their husbands. It is the men's duty to capture the fish only: the moment they come ashore their duties cease, and those of their wives and daughters begin in the sale and barter of the fish.

The French Government has done its part to facilitate the extension of oyster culture; it has set up model farms in order to give a practical demonstration of the best ways of carrying on the industry, and it has appointed vessels from its navy to the task of watching and protecting the farms. The Government farms are intended to demonstrate all questions connected with the mode of cultivation. Experiments are constantly being made as to the best way of collecting the spawn, and of fattening the oysters. In the Bay of Arcachon, for instance, may be seen great rows of Government fascines, like small houses, the space between being filled in with tiles and stones, and above these are suspended various inventions for spawn collecting in the shape of moveable floors and roofs of tiles, while all around lie scattered great quantities of old shells ready to do duty in the way of collecting such spawn as may not adhere to the other apparatus. As an example of the fitness of these modes of securing the young, it may be stated that as many as a thousand oysters have been counted on one tile. There is an excellent imperial park of the exemplar kind at Concarneau: it is situated in a creek called the Baie de la Forêt, and was formerly occupied as an oyster farm by a private person. The site of the establishment is thought to be most favourable to the growth of the oysters, as a feeding stream of fresh water flows into the beds, which occupy a space of about thirty imperial acres, and the chief business of these parks is to raise and cultivate brood to stock the parks of such as are beginning oyster farming. The group of parks in this baie have taken four years to complete, and we have no doubt they will be of great use both in serving as models for private breeders, and as dépôts for the sale of the best kinds of brood.

But as everybody cannot visit the oyster parks of France, it may be interesting if we recross the channel to tell what has been done, and what is now doing in our own country, in the matter of oyster culture; for have we not oyster farms on our own coasts of Kent and Essex? To us the

day being fine, and the sea calm, it seemed a pleasant and brief sail from Ostend, where we had been examining some oyster stews, to Whitstable, and we name this latter place because it is the scene of a very considerable and well-conducted industry in oysters. The oyster farm of Whitstable is held by a joint-stock company; it is a co-operative enterprise in the best sense of the term, and has been in existence for a long period. The oyster-bed of that place is about a mile and a half square, and has been such a very prosperous concern as to have acquired the name of "the happy fishing grounds." At Whitstable, Faversham, and adjoining water farms, not counting the large surface granted to a newly-formed company, a space of twenty-seven square miles is taken up in oyster culture, and the industry carried on in this piece of ground involves the gain and the expenditure of a very large sum of money yearly; 3,000 people are employed, who earn capital wages all the year round—the sum paid for labour by the various companies being set down at over 160,000*l.* per annum, and in addition to this expenditure for wages, a large sum is of course required for the repairing and purchasing of boats, sails, dredges, &c. &c.

The course of work at Whitstable is much as follows:—The business of the company is to feed oysters for the London and other markets; for this purpose they buy brood or spat, and lay it down in their beds to grow. When the company's own oysters produce a spat, that is, when the spawn or "floatsome," emitted from their own beds, falls upon their own ground, so much the better; but this falling of the spat is in a great degree accidental, as no rule can be laid down as to whether the oysters will spawn in any particular year, or where the spawn may be carried to. No artificial contrivances have hitherto been used at Whitstable for the saving of the spawn. We must now explain, before going further, the ratio of growth. While in the spat state it is calculated that a bushel measure will contain 25,000 oysters. When the spawn is two years old it is called brood, and while in this condition a bushel measure will hold 5,500. In the next stage of growth, oysters are called ware, and it takes about 2,000 to fill the bushel. In the final, or oyster stage, a bushel contains 1,500 individuals. Very large sums have been paid in some years by the Whitstable company for brood with which to stock their grounds, great quantities being collected from the Essex side; and a large number of people derive a comfortable income by collecting oyster brood on the public foreshores, and disposing of it to persons who have private oyster nurseries or "layings," as these are locally called. The grounds of Pont—an open water sixteen miles long by three broad—are particularly fruitful in spat, and free to all. About one hundred and fifty boats with crews of three or four men find constant employment upon it in obtaining young oysters, which are sold to the neighbouring oyster farmers, although it is certain that the brood thus freely obtained must have floated out of their own oyster beds. The price of brood is often as high as 40*s.* per bushel, and it is the sum

obtained over this cost price that must be looked to for the paying of wages and the realization of profit.

The beds of Whitstable are "worked" with great industry, and it is the process of "working" that improves the Whitstable oyster so much beyond those found on the natural beds, which are known as "commons," in contradistinction to the bred oysters which are called "natives." These latter are justly considered to be of superior flavour, although no particular reason can be given for their being so. Indeed, in many instances they are not natives at all, but a grand mixture of all kinds, brood being brought from Preston-Pans and Newhaven in the Frith of Forth, and from many other places, to enrich the stock. The so-called native oysters,—and the name is applied to all that are bred in the estuaries of the Thames,—are very large in flesh, succulent, and delicate, and fetch a much higher price than any other oyster. The beds of natives are all situated on the London clay or on similar formations. There can, however, be no doubt that the difference in flavour and quantity of flesh is produced by the system of transplanting and working that is rigorously carried on over all the beds in the estuary of the Thames. Every year the whole extent of the layings are gone over and examined by means of the dredge. Successive portions are dredged over day by day, and it may be said that almost every individual oyster is examined once a year. On the occasion of these examinations the brood is detached from the cultch, double oysters are separated, and all kinds of enemies (and these are very numerous) are seized upon and killed. It requires about eight men per acre to work the beds effectively. During three days a week, dredging for what is called the "planting" is carried on, that is, the transference of the oysters from one place to another, as may be thought suitable for their growth, and also the removing of dead ones, the clearing away of mussels, and so on. On the other three days of the week, it becomes the duty of the men to dredge for the London market. A bell is carried round and rung every morning to rouse the dredgers, and, at a given signal, all the men start to do their portion of the work. There is usually a prescribed task, or "stint," as it is locally called, that is, a certain quantity of oysters to procure of a shapely, sizeable condition, all others being thrown back to the sea, the small and nice-looking ones to wait till their beards be grown, the old and ugly ones to repeat the story of their birth. The business of the Whitstable Oyster Company is managed, and managed well, by a jury of twelve, and the shares or privileges of the company can only be held by the free dredgermen, a society into which there is only one way of admission, namely, by birth. A man's interest in the concern ends by his death, but, if married, the widow is entitled to a pension. The Whitstable Company have a fleet of boats, consisting of dredging smacks, and carrying hoy—*for they still carry on the old fashion of sending their oysters to Billingsgate by the Thames, they do not use the railway—which is valued at 20,000*l.*, and their lying stock of oysters is thought to be worth at least 200,000*l.**

There are several other oyster companies that carry on business in the estuary of the Thames. There is, for instance, the company of the burghers of Queensborough, which is as strictly regulated as that of Whitstable, and which produces the fine Milton oysters. We may also mention the Faversham Company, which claims to be the most ancient of all the Thames companies : it has existed for many centuries. Then there are many gentlemen who own private beds, and carry on a large business. Mr. Allston, a London oyster-merchant, has always from forty to fifty vessels engaged in the trade. These ships vary from small dredging vessels of eight or ten tons to carrying ships of thirty, forty, or fifty tons, according as they are employed on the home banks or in voyages to Ireland or the Channel Islands.

The system of management in all the companies on the Thames is very similar. The Colne Fishery Company, for instance, is superintended by a jury of twelve, appointed by a functionary called the water-bailiff, who, in his turn, is appointed by the corporation of Colchester. At the beginning of the season the jury meet together, take stock of the oysters in hand, and then fix the price at which sales may be made during the season, and also name the price to be paid to the dredgermen for lifting them, which is usually at so much per *wash*, the name of a local measure. The foreman of the company notifies to the dredgers their daily stint, which, of course, varies with the demand, and ranges from three to twelve wash ; but the time occupied in the task is seldom more than a couple of hours, leaving the remainder of the day at the man's own disposal; and as some of these dredgers are excellent divers, they frequently get extra employment. The professional dredgers who work for the Colne Company make very good wages, at from three to five shillings per wash of two pecks, —a fourth of what they earn is paid for the boat, and the rest of the money is divided among the crew. Private oystermen get their work done cheaper. But take the system of our home oyster farming as a whole, it is highly profitable, and only requires better machinery for the gathering of the spawn to be almost perfect.

We are sorry to know that the Scottish oystermen are not so provident as their brethren of the south. The Firth of Forth may, without exaggeration, be said to be one great oyster-bed; yet oysters are becoming yearly more difficult to obtain in Edinburgh. The oyster-beds of the Firth of Forth extend for a length of twenty miles, that is, from an island called Inch Muckra to Cockenzie, and at some places the beds are nearly three miles in breadth, the quality of the oysters being remarkably fine. The fishermen, although they hold these beds from the superiors at a merely nominal rent, do nothing in the way of adding to their natural productiveness by culture or cleaning. Five or six millions of oysters are taken out of the Forth every season, and this draught on the banks—coupled with the fact that in some years little or no spawn is emitted, and that the mortality among the young is very severe—it is thought, is now attaining a figure above the ratio of increase.

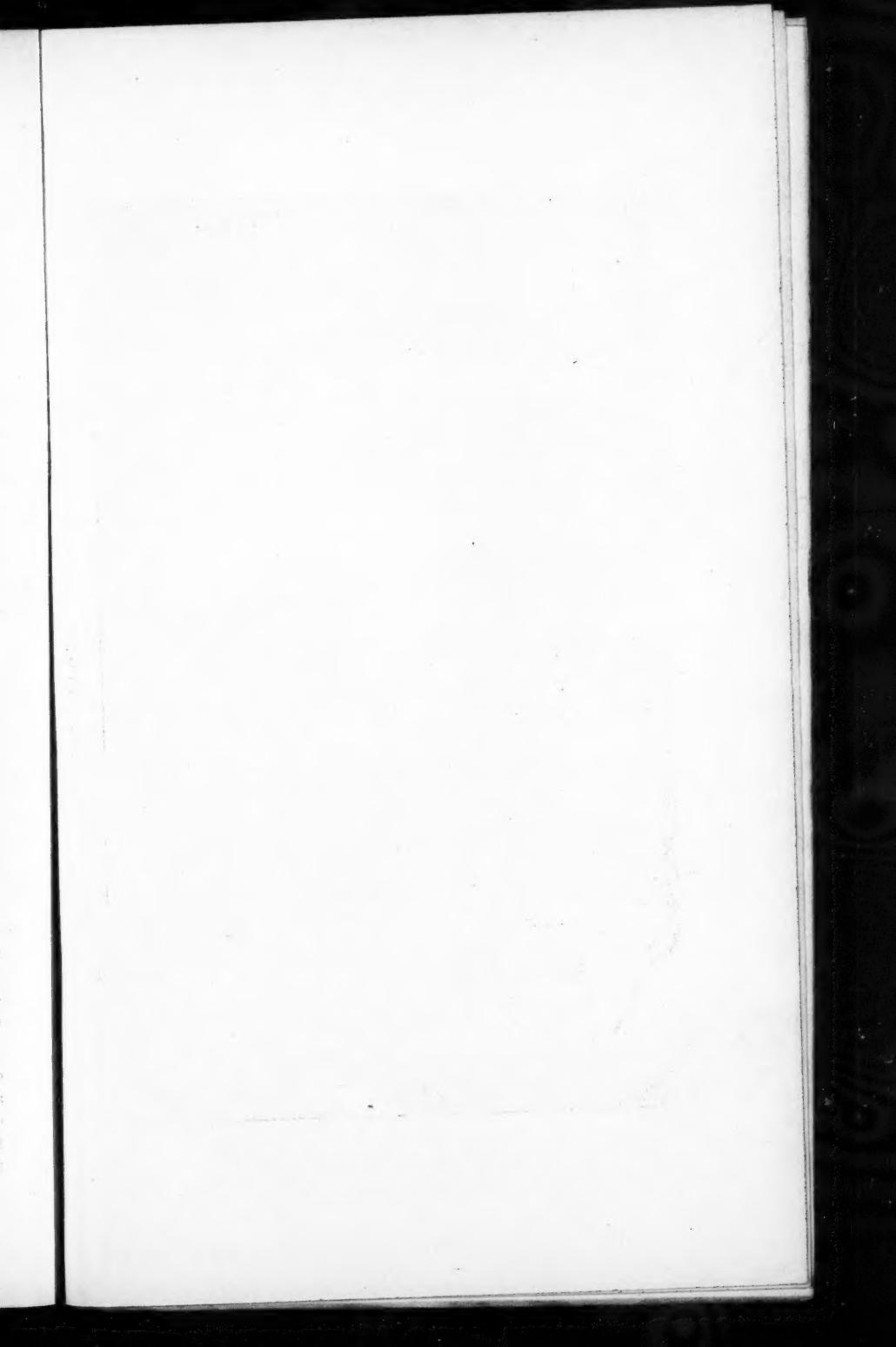
When we have told that an oyster is thought to yield from one to two millions of young, it may sound improbable that a draught on the banks of six millions a year should be dangerous to the productiveness of the beds; but although all kinds of shell-fish are remarkably fecund, it must be borne in mind that the mortality incidental to sea life is enormous, and there are animals that, according to the dredgers, devour the spat as sailors do pea-soup; and, as we have already stated, if the spawn does not speedily attain a coigne of vantage to which it can cling, it is for ever lost. Even the salmon, with its superior protective advantages, scarcely yields one presentable table fish for each thousand eggs that are spawned.

The Edinburgh oyster beds, which are held from the Corporation and the Duke of Buccleugh, at a total sum of 35*l.* per annum, are managed by the society of free fishermen of Newhaven. The best oysters are found on the beds belonging to the Duke of Buccleugh, but unfortunately they are not allowed to lie a proper time so as to come to maturity and reproduce, in consequence of there being too many boats engaged in the dredging. They number no fewer than from fifty to seventy in all, and the daily takings of each boat vary much, ranging from 1,200 to 2,500 : they are usually disposed of at the boat's side, at prices varying from 10*d.* to 3*s.* per hundred—thirty-two being added to each hundred, as is customary among fishermen. Very fine oysters are brought from Preston-Pans, a little fishing-place about eight miles from Edinburgh. These are known as "pandores," and their praises have been celebrated by Christopher North and other celebrated gastronomers. They are said to derive their fine flavour from the refuse water escaping from the salt pans, and they used to be taken close to these establishments, hence their name of "pan-doors." The beds at this part of the Forth are also greatly neglected, so far as any kind of cultivation is concerned, and we regret to see that large quantities of brood are being daily dredged for the purpose of feeding the oyster beds in the estuary of the Thames. Upon the last occasion of our inspecting these beds no less than a hundred barrels of oyster brood were in course of being despatched to the beds of Whitstable and neighbourhood, so that next year, or next again, the Londoners will, in all probability, be feasting on the pandore "natives" of Preston-Pans.

The wholesale spoliation now going on at the oyster-beds of the Frith of Forth is greatly to be regretted, although we think it is destined to work its own cure, for the beds once thoroughly exhausted from the over-dredging which is now going on—and it is so great that the oysters consumed in Edinburgh will soon have to be brought from London—will in all probability be given over to persons to restock on the plan now so popular on the continent, and the fishermen be very properly deprived of the chance of ever again despoiling them. The Frith of Forth seems as if it had been destined by nature for the laying down of oyster farms : every inch of the bottom of that river might be laid thick with oysters from Alloa to North Berwick. A thousand oyster farmers might within the bounds of the present beds carry on a highly remunerative business.

It is pleasing to note that the Irish people are becoming in some degree alive to the productive powers of their seaboard, and that licences for the formation of oyster beds on various parts of the coast are constantly applied for; so large a space as 5,000 acres, extending over the shores of ten counties, having been granted by the Fishery Commissioners to twenty-six different persons for the purposes of oyster farming. What is wanted in the sister isle is "a public opinion" on the subject of the fisheries; this, Mr. Redmond Barry, who has kindly sent us a great budget of information, is labouring to create. As regards the Irish oyster fisheries, it is curious to note that, although the Irish "natives" had at one time a very bad reputation, all the great banks have been cleaned out by over fishing. The celebrated Carlingford beds are exhausted, so are the many beds of Sligo, as also the oyster banks of Clare; on the far-famed Tralee beds there is not even the ghost of a shell to be found, while some of the remaining beds are being so rapidly exhausted by the transportation of the young oysters to the English banks, that in a short time they, too, will be without a single oyster. As much as 8,000*l.* have been paid for brood at certain of the Irish fisheries, and this was shipped away to be fed as natives in the Thames. A celebrated Thames oyster farmer, who has largely surveyed the Irish coast, is of opinion that it contains many fine spots for the laying down of oyster beds, and that a very large commerce might be carried on, if not in oysters for consumption, at any rate in brood, for the Thames oyster companies.

According to a correspondent of *The Times*, the number of oysters consumed in Paris is at the rate of upwards of one million per day! In order that a proper judgment might be come to as regards the flavour and quality of French grown oysters, a tasting exhibition was recently held by the Acclimatization Society of Paris, when a great number of different growths were criticized. The oysters were all opened on the deep shell, and were not touched by spoon or fork, but were sucked into the mouth, which is the proper way to eat them, and had no condiment other than their own sauce. We need not go over the names of the localities preferred; suffice it to say, that great praise was bestowed on this new phase of French industry, and on M. Coste for its development. We consume enormous quantities of oysters, too, and surely we can do in England what is done so easily in France. From what is annually accomplished in the estuary of the Thames, without much culture, it is clear that our supplies can be largely augmented, and that, however great may be the demand, it can be met by an extension of the plan of oyster farming.



SHAKESPEARE AND THE MUSICAL GLASSES.



Wives and Daughters.

AN EVERY-DAY STORY.

CHAPTER XV.

THE NEW MAMMA.



N Tuesday afternoon Molly returned home, to the home which was already strange, and what Warwickshire people would call "unked," to her. New paint, new paper, new colours; grim servants dressed in their best, and objecting to every change—from their master's marriage to the new oilcloth in the hall, "which tripped 'em up, and threw 'em down, and was cold to the feet, and smelt just abominable." All these complaints Molly had to listen to, and it was not a cheerful preparation for the reception which she already felt to be so formidable.

The sound of their carriage-wheels was heard at last, and Molly went to the front door to meet them.

Her father got out first, and took her hand and held it while he helped his bride to alight. Then he kissed her fondly, and passed her on to his wife; but her veil was so securely (and becomingly) fastened down, that it was some time before Mrs. Gibson could get her lips clear to greet her new daughter. Then there was luggage to be seen about; and both the travellers were occupied in this, while Molly stood by, trembling with excitement, unable to help, and only conscious of Betty's rather cross looks, as heavy box after heavy box jammed up the passage.

"Molly, my dear, show—your mamma to her room!"

Mr. Gibson had hesitated, because the question of the name by which Molly was to call her new relation had never occurred to him before. The colour flashed into Molly's face. Was she to call her "mamma?"—the name long appropriated in her mind to some one else—to her own dead mother. The rebellious heart rose against it, but she said nothing.

She led the way upstairs, Mrs. Gibson turning round, from time to time, with some fresh direction as to which bag or trunk she needed most. She hardly spoke to Molly till they were both in the newly-furnished bedroom, where a small fire had been lighted by Molly's orders.

"Now, my love, we can embrace each other in peace. O dear, how tired I am!"—(after the embrace had been accomplished.) "My spirits are so easily affected with fatigue; but your dear papa has been kindness itself. Dear! what an old-fashioned bed! And what a— But it doesn't signify. By and by we'll renovate the house—won't we, my dear? And you'll be my little maid to-night, and help me to arrange a few things, for I'm just worn out with the day's journey."

"I've ordered a sort of tea-dinner to be ready for you," said Molly.
"Shall I go and tell them to send it in?"

"I'm not sure if I can go down again to-night. It would be very comfortable to have a little table brought in here, and sit in my dressing-gown by this cheerful fire. But, to be sure, there's your dear papa? I really don't think he would eat anything if I were not there. One must not think about oneself, you know. Yes, I'll come down in a quarter of an hour."

But Mr. Gibson had found a note awaiting him, with an immediate summons to an old patient, dangerously ill; and, snatching a mouthful of food while his horse was being saddled, he had to resume at once his old habits of attention to his profession above everything.

As soon as Mrs. Gibson found that he was not likely to miss her presence—he had eaten a very tolerable lunch of bread and cold meat in solitude, so her fears about his appetite in her absence were not well founded—she desired to have her meal upstairs in her own room; and poor Molly, not daring to tell the servants of this whim, had to carry up first a table, which, however small, was too heavy for her; and afterwards all the choice portions of the meal, which she had taken great pains to arrange on the table, as she had seen such things done at Hamley, intermixed with fruit and flowers that had that morning been sent in from various great houses where Mr. Gibson was respected and valued. How pretty Molly had thought her handiwork an hour or two before! How dreary it seemed as, at last released from Mrs. Gibson's conversation, she sate down in solitude to cold tea and the drumsticks of the chicken! No one to look at her preparations, and admire her deft-handedness and taste! She had thought that her father would be gratified by it, and then he had never seen it. She had meant her cares as an offering of good-will to her stepmother, who even now was ringing her bell to have the tray taken away, and Miss Gibson summoned to her bedroom.

Molly hastily finished her meal, and went upstairs again.

"I feel so lonely, darling, in this strange house; do come and be with me, and help me to unpack. I think your dear papa might have put off his visit to Mr. Craven Smith for just this one evening."

"Mr. Craven Smith couldn't put off his dying," said Molly, bluntly.

"You droll girl!" said Mrs. Gibson, with a faint laugh. "But if this Mr. Smith is dying, as you say, what's the use of your father's going off to him in such a hurry? Does he expect any legacy, or anything of that kind?"

Molly bit her lips to prevent herself from saying something disagreeable. She only answered,—

"I don't quite know that he is dying. The man said so; and papa can sometimes do something to make the last struggle easier. At any rate, it's always a comfort to the family to have him."

"What dreary knowledge of death you have learned for a girl of your age! Really, if I had heard all these details of your father's profession, I doubt if I could have brought myself to have him!"

"He doesn't make the illness or the death; he does his best against them. I call it a very fine thing to think of what he does or tries to do. And you will think so, too, when you see how he is watched for, and how people welcome him!"

"Well, don't let us talk any more of such gloomy things to-night! I think I shall go to bed at once, I am so tired, if you will only sit by me till I get sleepy, darling. If you will talk to me, the sound of your voice will soon send me off."

Molly got a book, and read her stepmother to sleep, preferring that to the harder task of keeping up a continual murmur of speech.

Then she stole down and went into the dining-room, where the fire was gone out; purposely neglected by the servants, to mark their displeasure at their new mistress's having had her tea in her own room. Molly managed to light it, however, before her father came home, and collected and rearranged some comfortable food for him. Then she knelt down again on the hearth-rug, gazing into the fire in a dreamy reverie, which had enough of sadness about it to cause the tears to drop unnoticed from her eyes. But she jumped up, and shook herself into brightness at the sound of her father's step.

"How is Mr. Craven Smith?" said she.

"Dead. He just recognized me. He was one of my first patients on coming to Hollingford."

Mr. Gibson sat down in the arm-chair made ready for him, and warmed his hands at the fire, seeming neither to need food nor talk, as he went over a train of recollections. Then he roused himself from his sadness, and looking round the room, he said briskly enough,—

"And where's the new mamma?"

"She was tired, and went to bed early. Oh, papa! must I call her 'mamma'?"

"I should like it," replied he, with a slight contraction of the brows.

Molly was silent. She put a cup of tea near him; he stirred it, and sipped it, and then he recurred to the subject.

"Why shouldn't you call her 'mamma'? I'm sure she means to do

the duty of a mother to you. We all may make mistakes, and her ways may not be quite all at once our ways ; but at any rate let us start with a family bond between us."

What would Roger say was right ?—that was the question that rose to Molly's mind. She had always spoken of her father's new wife as Mrs. Gibson, and had once burst out at Miss Brownings' with a protestation that she never would call her "mamma." She did not feel drawn to her new relation by their intercourse that evening. She kept silence, though she knew her father was expecting an answer. At last he gave up his expectation, and turned to another subject ; told about their journey, questioned her as to the Hamleys, the Brownings, Lady Harriet, and the afternoon they had passed together at the Manor House. But there was a certain hardness and constraint in his manner, and in hers a heaviness and absence of mind. All at once she said,—

"Papa, I will call her 'mamma !'"

He took her hand, and grasped it tight ; but for an instant or two he did not speak. Then he said,—

" You won't be sorry for it, Molly, when you come to lie as poor Craven Smith did to-night."

For some time the murmurs and grumblings of the two elder servants were confined to Molly's ears, then they spread to her father's, who, to Molly's dismay, made summary work with them.

" You don't like Mrs. Gibson's ringing her bell so often, don't you ? You've been spoilt, I'm afraid ; but if you don't conform to my wife's desires, you have the remedy in your own hands, you know."

What servant ever resisted the temptation to give warning after such a speech as that ? Betty told Molly she was going to leave, in as indifferent a manner as she could possibly assume towards the girl, whom she had tended and been about for the last sixteen years. Molly had hitherto considered her former nurse as a fixture in the house ; she would almost as soon have thought of her father's proposing to sever the relationship between them ; and here was Betty coolly talking over whether her next place should be in town or country. But a great deal of this was assumed hardness. In a week or two Betty was in floods of tears at the prospect of leaving her nursling, and would fain have stayed and answered all the bells in the house once every quarter of an hour. Even Mr. Gibson's masculine heart was touched by the sorrow of the old servant, which made itself obvious to him every time he came across her by her broken voice and her swollen eyes.

One day he said to Molly, "I wish you'd ask your mamma if Betty might not stay, if she made a proper apology, and all that sort of thing."

" I don't much think it will be of any use," said Molly, in a mournful voice. " I know she is writing, or has written, about some under-house-maid at the Towers."

" Well !—all I want is peace and a decent quantity of cheerfulness

when I come home. I see enough of tears in other people's houses. After all, Betty has been with us sixteen years—a sort of service of the antique world. But the woman may be happier elsewhere. Do as you like about asking mamma; only if she agrees, I shall be quite willing."

So Molly tried her hand at making a request to that effect to Mrs. Gibson. Her instinct told her she should be unsuccessful; but surely favour was never refused in so soft a tone.

"My dear girl, I should never have thought of sending an old servant away,—one who has had the charge of you from your birth, or nearly so. I could not have had the heart to do it. She might have stayed for ever for me, if she had only attended to all my wishes; and I am not unreasonable, am I? But, you see, she complained; and when your dear papa spoke to her, she gave warning; and it is quite against my principles ever to take an apology from a servant who has given warning."

"She is so sorry," pleaded Molly; "she says she will do anything you wish, and attend to all your orders, if she may only stay."

"But, sweet one, you seem to forget that I cannot go against my principles, however much I may be sorry for Betty. She should not have given way to ill-temper, as I said before; although I never liked her, and considered her a most inefficient servant, thoroughly spoilt by having had no mistress for so long, I should have borne with her—at least, I think I should—as long as I could. Now I have all but engaged Maria, who was under-housemaid at the Towers, so don't let me hear any more of Betty's sorrow, or anybody else's sorrow, for I'm sure, what with your dear papa's sad stories and other things, I'm getting quite low."

Molly was silent for a moment or two.

"Have you quite engaged Maria?" asked she.

"No—I said 'all but engaged.' Sometimes one would think you did not hear things, dear Molly!" replied Mrs. Gibson, petulantly. "Maria is living in a place where they don't give her as much wages as she deserves. Perhaps they can't afford it, poor things! I'm always sorry for poverty, and would never speak hardly of those who are not rich; but I have offered her two pounds more than she gets at present, so I think she'll leave. At any rate, if they increase her wages, I shall increase my offer in proportion; so I think I'm sure to get her. Such a genteel girl!—always brings in a letter on a salver!"

"Poor Betty!" said Molly, softly.

"Poor old soul! I hope she'll profit by the lesson, I'm sure," sighed out Mrs. Gibson; "but it's a pity we hadn't Maria before the county families began to call."

Mrs. Gibson had been highly gratified by the circumstance of so many calls "from county families." Her husband was much respected; and many ladies from various halls, courts, and houses, who had profited by his services towards themselves and their families, thought it right to

pay his new wife the attention of a call when they drove into Hollingsford to shop. The state of expectation into which these calls threw Mrs. Gibson rather diminished Mr. Gibson's domestic comfort. It was awkward to be carrying hot, savoury-smelling dishes from the kitchen to the dining-room at the very time when high-born ladies, with noses of aristocratic refinement, might be calling. Still more awkward was the accident which happened in consequence of clumsy Betty's haste to open the front door to a lofty footman's ran-tan, which caused her to set down the basket containing the dirty plates right in his mistress's way, as she stepped gingerly through the comparative darkness of the hall; and then the young men, leaving the dining-room quietly enough, but bursting with long-repressed giggle, or no longer restraining their tendency to practical joking, no matter who might be in the passage when they made their exit. The remedy proposed by Mrs. Gibson for all these distressing grievances was a late dinner. The luncheon for the young men, as she observed to her husband, might be sent into the surgery. A few elegant cold trifles for herself and Molly would not scent the house, and she would always take care to have some little dainty ready for him. He acceded, but unwillingly, for it was an innovation on the habits of a lifetime, and he felt as if he should never be able to arrange his rounds aright with this new-fangled notion of a six o'clock dinner.

"Don't get any dainties for me, my dear ; bread and cheese is the chief of my diet, like it was that of the old woman's."

"I know nothing of your old woman," replied his wife ; "but really I cannot allow cheese to come beyond the kitchen."

"Then I'll eat it there," said he. "It's close to the stable-yard, and if I come in in a hurry I can get it in a moment."

"Really, Mr. Gibson, it is astonishing to compare your appearance and manners with your tastes. You look such a gentleman, as dear Lady Cumnor used to say."

Then the cook left; also an old servant, though not so old a one as Betty. The cook did not like the trouble of late dinners; and, being a Methodist, she objected on religious grounds to trying any of Mrs. Gibson's new receipts for French dishes. It was not scriptural, she said. There was a deal of mention of food in the Bible; but it was of sheep ready dressed, which meant mutton, and of wine, and of bread and milk, and figs and raisins, of fatted calves, a good well-browned fillet of veal, and such like; but it had always gone against her conscience to cook swine-flesh and make raised pork-pies, and now if she was to be set to cook heathen dishes after the fashion of the Papists, she'd sooner give it all up together. So the cook followed in Betty's track, and Mr. Gibson had to satisfy his healthy English appetite on badly made omelettes, rissoles, vol-au-vents, croquets, and timbales; never being exactly sure what he was eating.

He had made up his mind before his marriage to yield in trifles, and be firm in greater things. But the differences of opinion about trifles arose every day, and were perhaps more annoying than if they had related

to things of more consequence. Molly knew her father's looks as well as she knew her alphabet; his wife did not; and being an unperceptive person, except when her own interests were dependent upon another person's humour, never found out how he was worried by all the small daily concessions which he made to her will or her whims. He never allowed himself to put any regret into shape, even in his own mind; he repeatedly reminded himself of his wife's good qualities, and comforted himself by thinking they should work together better as time rolled on; but he was very angry at a bachelor great-uncle of Mr. Coxe's, who, after taking no notice of his red-headed nephew for years, suddenly sent for him, after the old man had partially recovered from a serious attack of illness, and appointed him his heir, on condition that his great-nephew remained with him during the remainder of his life. This had happened almost directly after Mr. and Mrs. Gibson's return from their wedding journey, and once or twice since that time Mr. Gibson had found himself wondering why the deuce old Benson could not have made up his mind sooner, and so have rid his house of the unwelcome presence of the young lover. To do Mr. Coxe justice, in the very last conversation he had as a pupil with Mr. Gibson he had said, with hesitating awkwardness, that perhaps the new circumstances in which he should be placed might make some difference with regard to Mr. Gibson's opinion on—

"Not at all," said Mr. Gibson, quickly. "You are both of you too young to know your own minds; and if my daughter was silly enough to be in love, she should never have to calculate her happiness on the chances of an old man's death. I dare say he'll disinherit you after all. He may do, and then you'd be worse off than ever. No! go away, and forget all this nonsense; and when you've done, come back and see us!"

So Mr. Coxe went away, with an oath of unalterable faithfulness in his heart; and Mr. Gibson had unwillingly to fulfil an old promise made to a gentleman farmer in the neighbourhood a year or two before, and to take the second son of Mr. Browne in young Coxe's place. He was to be the last of the race of pupils, and he was rather more than a year younger than Molly. Mr. Gibson trusted that there would be no repetition of the Coxe romance.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BRIDE AT HOME.

AMONG the "county people" (as Mrs. Gibson termed them) who called upon her as a bride, were the two young Mr. Hamleys. The squire, their father, had done his congratulations, as far as he ever intended to do them, to Mr. Gibson himself when he came to the hall; but Mrs. Hamley, unable to go and pay visits herself, anxious to show attention to her kind doctor's new wife, and with perhaps a little sympathetic curiosity as to how Molly and her stepmother got on together, made her sons ride

over to Hollingsford with her cards and apologies. They came into the newly-furnished drawing-room, looking bright and fresh from their ride : Osborne first, as usual, perfectly dressed for the occasion, and with the sort of fine manner which sate so well upon him ; Roger, looking like a strong-built, cheerful, intelligent country farmer, followed in his brother's train. Mrs. Gibson was dressed for receiving callers, and made the effect she always intended to produce, of a very pretty woman, no longer in first youth, but with such soft manners and such a caressing voice, that people forgot to wonder what her real age might be. Molly was better dressed than formerly ; her stepmother saw after that. She disliked anything old or shabby, or out of taste about her ; it hurt her eye ; and she had already fidgeted Molly into a new amount of care about the manner in which she put on her clothes, arranged her hair, and was gloved and shod. Mrs. Gibson had tried to put her through a course of rosemary washes and creams in order to improve her tanned complexion ; but about that Molly was either forgetful or rebellious, and Mrs. Gibson could not well come up to the girl's bedroom every night and see that she daubed her face and neck over with the cosmetics so carefully provided for her. Still her appearance was extremely improved, even to Osborne's critical eye. Roger sought rather to discover in her looks and expression whether she was happy or not ; his mother had especially charged him to note all these signs.

Osborne and Mrs. Gibson made themselves agreeable to each other according to the approved fashion when a young man calls on a middle-aged bride. They talked of the "Shakspeare and musical glasses" of the day, each vying with the other in their knowledge of London topics. Molly heard fragments of their conversation in the pauses of silence between Roger and herself. Her hero was coming out in quite a new character ; no longer literary or poetical, or romantic, or critical, he was now full of the last new play, the singers at the opera. He had the advantage over Mrs. Gibson, who, in fact, only spoke of these things from hearsay, from listening to the talk at the Towers, while Osborne had run up from Cambridge two or three times to hear this, or to see that wonder of the season. But she had the advantage over him in greater boldness of invention to eke out her facts ; and besides she had more skill in the choice and arrangement of her words, so as to make it appear as if the opinions that were in reality quotations, were formed by herself from actual experience or personal observation ; such as, in speaking of the mannerisms of a famous Italian singer, she would ask,—

"Did you observe her constant trick of heaving her shoulders and clasping her hands together before she took a high note ?"—which was so said as to imply that Mrs. Gibson herself had noticed this trick. Molly, who had a pretty good idea by this time of how her stepmother had passed the last year of her life, listened with no small bewilderment to this conversation ; but at length decided that she must misunderstand what they were saying, as she could not gather up the missing links for the necessity of replying to Roger's questions and remarks. Osborne was

not the same Osborne he was when with his mother at the hall. Roger saw her glancing at his brother.

" You think my brother looking ill ? " said he, lowering his voice.

" No—not exactly."

" He is not well. Both my father and I are anxious about him. That run on the Continent did him harm, instead of good; and his disappointment at his examination has told upon him, I'm afraid."

" I was not thinking he looked ill; only changed somehow."

" He says he must go back to Cambridge soon. Possibly it may do him good; and I shall be off next week. This is a farewell visit to you, as well as one of congratulation to Mrs. Gibson."

" Your mother will feel your both going away, won't she? But of course young men will always have to live away from home."

" Yes," he replied. " Still she feels it a good deal; and I am not satisfied about her health either. You will go out and see her sometimes, will you? she is very fond of you."

" If I may," said Molly, unconsciously glancing at her stepmother. She had an uncomfortable instinct that, in spite of Mrs. Gibson's own perpetual flow of words, she could, and did, hear everything that fell from Molly's lips.

" Do you want any more books?" said he. " If you do, make a list out, and send it to my mother before I leave, next Tuesday. After I am gone, there will be no one to go into the library and pick them out."

After they were gone, Mrs. Gibson began her usual comments on the departed visitors.

" I do like that Osborne Hamley! What a nice fellow he is! Somehow, I always do like eldest sons. He will have the estate, won't he? I shall ask your dear papa to encourage him to come about the house. He will be a very good, very pleasant acquaintance for you and Cynthia. The other is but a loutish young fellow, to my mind; there is no aristocratic bearing about him. I suppose he takes after his mother, who is but a parvenue, I've heard them say at the Towers."

Molly was spiteful enough to have great pleasure in saying,—

" I think I've heard her father was a Russian merchant, and imported tallow and hemp. Mr. Osborne Hamley is extremely like her."

" Indeed! But there's no calculating these things. Anyhow, he is the perfect gentleman in appearance and manner. The estate is entailed, is it not?"

" I know nothing about it," said Molly.

A short silence ensued. Then Mrs. Gibson said,—

" Do you know, I almost think I must get dear papa to give a little dinner-party, and ask Mr. Osborne Hamley? I should like to have him feel at home in this house. It would be something cheerful for him after the dulness and solitude of Hamley Hall. For the old people don't visit much, I believe?"

" He's going back to Cambridge next week," said Molly.

"Is he? Well, then, we'll put off our little dinner till Cynthia comes home. I should like to have some young society for her, poor darling, when she returns."

"When is she coming?" said Molly, who had always a longing curiosity for this same Cynthia's return.

"Oh! I'm not sure; perhaps at the new year—perhaps not till Easter. I must get this drawing-room all new furnished first; and then I mean to fit up her room and yours just alike. They are just the same size, only on opposite sides of the passage."

"Are you going to new-furnish that room?" said Molly, in astonishment at the never-ending changes.

"Yes; and yours, too, darling; so don't be jealous."

"Oh, please, mamma, not mine," said Molly, taking in the idea for the first time.

"Yes, dear! You shall have yours done as well. A little French bed, and a new paper, and a pretty carpet, and a dressed-up toilet-table and glass, will make it look quite a different place."

"But I don't want it to look different. I like it as it is. Pray don't do anything to it."

"What nonsense, child! I never heard anything more ridiculous! Most girls would be glad to get rid of furniture only fit for the lumber-room."

"It was my own mamma's before she was married," said Molly, in a very low voice; bringing out this last plea unwillingly, but with a certainty that it would not be resisted.

Mrs. Gibson paused for a moment before she replied:

"It's very much to your credit that you should have such feelings, I'm sure. But don't you think sentiment may be carried too far? Why, we should have no new furniture at all, and should have to put up with worm-eaten horrors. Besides, my dear, Hollingsford will seem very dull to Cynthia, after pretty, gay France, and I want to make the first impressions attractive. I've a notion I can settle her down near here; and I want her to come in a good temper; for, between ourselves, my dear, she is a little, leetle wilful. You need not mention this to your papa."

"But can't you do Cynthia's room, and not mine? Please let mine alone."

"No, indeed! I couldn't agree to that. Only think what would be said of me by everybody; petting my own child, and neglecting my husband's! I couldn't bear it."

"No one need know."

"In such a tittle-tattle place as Hollingsford! Really, Molly, you are either very stupid or very obstinate, or else you don't care what hard things may be said about me: and all for a selfish fancy of your own! No! I owe myself the justice of acting in this matter as I please. Every one shall know I'm not a common stepmother. Every penny I spend on Cynthia I shall spend on you too; so it's no use talking any more about it."

So Molly's little white dainty bed, her old-fashioned chest of drawers, and her other cherished relics of her mother's maiden-days, were consigned to the lumber-room; and a little while, when Cynthia and her great French boxes had come home, the old furniture that had filled up the space required for the fresh importation of trunks, disappeared into the lumber-room.

All this time the family at the Towers had been absent; Lady Cumnor had been ordered to Bath for the early part of the winter, and her family were with her there. On dull rainy days, Mrs. Gibson used to bethink her of missing "the Cumnors," for so she had taken to calling them since her position had become more independent of theirs. It marked a distinction between her intimacy in the family, and the reverential manner in which the townspeople were accustomed to speak of "the earl and the countess." Both Lady Cumnor and Lady Harriet wrote to their dear Clare from time to time. The former had generally some commissions that she wished to have executed at the Towers, or in the town; and no one could do them so well as Clare, who was acquainted with all the tastes and ways of the countess. These commissions were the cause of various bills for flys and cars from the George Inn. Mr. Gibson pointed out this consequence to his wife; but she, in return, bade him remark that a present of game was pretty sure to follow upon the satisfactory execution of Lady Cumnor's wishes. Somehow, Mr. Gibson did not quite like this consequence either; but he was silent about it, at any rate. Lady Harriet's letters were short and amusing. She had that sort of regard for her old governess which prompted her to write from time to time, and to feel glad when the half-voluntary task was accomplished. So there was no real outpouring of confidence, but enough news of the family and gossip of the place she was in, as she thought would make Clare feel that she was not forgotten by her former pupils, intermixed with moderate but sincere expressions of regard. How those letters were quoted and referred to by Mrs. Gibson in her conversations with the Hollingsford ladies! She had found out their effect at Ashcombe; and it was not less at Hollingsford. But she was rather perplexed at kindly messages to Molly, and at inquiries as to how the Miss Brownings liked the tea she had sent; and Molly had first to explain, and then to narrate at full length, all the occurrences of the afternoon at Ashecombe Manor House, and Lady Harriet's subsequent call upon her at Miss Brownings'.

"What nonsense!" said Mrs. Gibson, with some annoyance. "Lady Harriet only went to see you out of a desire of amusement. She would only make fun of Miss Brownings, and those two will be quoting her and talking about her, just as if she was their intimate friend."

"I don't think she did make fun of them. She really seemed as if she had been very kind."

"And you suppose you know her ways better than I do, who have known her these fifteen years? I tell you she turns every one into ridi-

cule who does not belong to her set. Why, she used always to speak of Miss Brownings as ‘Pecksy and Flapsy.’ ”

“ She promised me she would not,” said Molly driven to bay.

“ Promised you!—Lady Harriet? What do you mean?”

“ Only—she spoke of them as Pecksy and Flapsy—and when she talked of coming to call on me at their house, I asked her not to come if she was going to—to make fun of them.”

“ Upon my word! with all my long acquaintance with Lady Harriet I should never have ventured on such impertinence.”

“ I didn’t mean it as impertinence,” said Molly, sturdily. “ And I don’t think Lady Harriet took it as such.”

“ You can’t know anything about it. She can put on any kind of manner.”

Just then Squire Hamley came in. It was his first call; and Mrs. Gibson gave him a graceful welcome, and was quite ready to accept his apology for its tardiness, and to assure him that she quite understood the pressure of business on every landowner who farmed his own estate. But no such apology was made. He shook her hand heartily, as a mark of congratulation on her good fortune in having secured such a prize as his friend Gibson, but said nothing about his long neglect of duty. Molly, who by this time knew the few strong expressions of his countenance well, was sure that something was the matter, and that he was very much disturbed. He hardly attended to Mrs. Gibson’s fluent opening of conversation, for she had already determined to make a favourable impression on the father of the handsome young man who was heir to an estate, besides his own personal agreeableness; but he turned to Molly, and, addressing her, said—almost in a low voice, as if he was making a confidence to her that he did not intend Mrs. Gibson to hear,—

“ Molly, we are all wrong at home! Osborne has lost the fellowship at Trinity he went back to try for. Then he has gone and failed miserably in his degree, after all that he said, and that his mother said; and I, like a fool, went and boasted about my clever son. I can’t understand it. I never expected anything extraordinary from Roger; but Osborne—! And then it has thrown madam into one of her bad fits of illness; and she seems to have a fancy for you, child! Your father came to see her this morning. Poor thing, she’s very poorly, I’m afraid; and she told him how she should like to have you about her, and he said I might fetch you. You’ll come, won’t you, my dear? She’s not a poor woman, such as many people think it’s the only charity to be kind to, but she’s just as forlorn of woman’s care as if she was poor—worse, I dare say.”

“ I’ll be ready in ten minutes,” said Molly, much touched by the squire’s words and manner, never thinking of asking her stepmother’s consent, now that she had heard that her father had given his. As she rose to leave the room, Mrs. Gibson, who had only half heard what the squire had said, and was a little affronted at the exclusiveness of his confidence, said,—“ My dear, where are you going?”

"Mrs. Hamley wants me, and papa says I may go," said Molly; and almost at the same time the squire replied,—

"My wife is ill, and as she's very fond of your daughter, she begged Mr. Gibson to allow her to come to the Hall for a little while, and he kindly said she might, and I'm come to fetch her."

"Stop a minute, darling," said Mrs. Gibson to Molly—a slight cloud over her countenance, in spite of her caressing word: "I am sure dear papa quite forgot that you were to go out with me to-night, to visit people," continued she, addressing herself to the squire, "with whom I am quite unacquainted—and it is very uncertain if Mr. Gibson can return in time to go with me—so, you see, I cannot allow Molly to go with you."

"I shouldn't have thought it would have signified. Brides are always brides, I suppose; and it's their part to be timid; but I shouldn't have thought it—in this case. And my wife sets her heart on things, as sick people do. Well, Molly" (in a louder tone, for these foregoing sentences were spoken *sotto voce*), "we must put it off till to-morrow: and it's our loss, not yours," he continued, as he saw the reluctance with which she slowly returned to her place. "You'll be as gay as can be to-night, I dare say——"

"No, I shall not," broke in Molly. "I never wanted to go, and now I shall want it less than ever."

"Hush, my dear," said Mrs. Gibson; and, addressing the squire, she added, "the visiting here is not all one could wish for so young a girl—no young people, no dances, nothing of gaiety; but it is wrong in you, Molly, to speak against such kind friends of your father's as I understand these Cockerells are. Don't give so bad an impression of yourself to the kind squire."

"Let her alone! let her alone!" quoth he. "I see what she means. She'd rather come and be in my wife's sick-room than go out for this visit to-night. Is there no way of getting her off?"

"None whatever," said Mrs. Gibson. "An engagement is an engagement with me; and I consider that she is not only engaged to Mrs. Cockerell, but to me—bound to accompany me, in my husband's absence."

The squire was put out; and when he was put out he had a trick of placing his hands on his knees and whistling softly to himself. Molly knew this phase of his displeasure, and only hoped he would confine himself to this wordless expression of annoyance. It was pretty hard work for her to keep the tears out of her eyes; and she endeavoured to think of something else, rather than dwell on regrets and annoyances. She heard Mrs. Gibson talking on in a sweet monotone, and wished to attend to what she was saying, but the squire's visible annoyance struck sharper on her mind. At length, after a pause of silence, he started up, and said,—

"Well! it's no use. Poor madam; she won't like it. She'll be disappointed! But it's but for one evening!—but for one evening! She

may come to-morrow, mayn't she? Or will the dissipation of such an evening as she describes, be too much for her?"

There was a touch of savage irony in his manner which frightened Mrs. Gibson into good behaviour.

"She shall be ready at any time you name. I am so sorry: my foolish shyness is in fault, I believe; but still you must acknowledge that an engagement is an engagement."

"Did I ever say an engagement was an elephant, madam? However, there's no use saying any more about it, or I shall forget my manners. I'm an old tyrant, and she—lying there in bed, poor girl—has always given me my own way. So you'll excuse me, Mrs. Gibson, won't you; and let Molly come along with me at ten to-morrow morning?"

"Certainly," said Mrs. Gibson, smiling. But when his back was turned, she said to Molly,—

"Now, my dear, I must never have you exposing me to the ill-manners of such a man again! I don't call him a squire; I call him a boor, or a yeoman at best. You must not go on accepting or rejecting invitations as if you were an independent young lady, Molly. Pay me the respect of a reference to my wishes another time, if you please, my dear!"

"Papa had said I might go," said Molly, choking a little.

"As I am now your mamma your references must be to me, for the future. But as you are to go you may as well look well dressed. I will lend you my new shawl for this visit, if you like it, and my set of green ribbons. I am always indulgent when proper respect is paid to me. And in such a house as Hamley Hall, no one can tell who may be coming and going, even if there is sickness in the family."

"Thank you. But I don't want the shawl and the ribbons, please: there will be nobody there except the family. There never is, I think; and now that she is so ill"—Molly was on the point of crying at the thought of her friend lying ill and lonely, and looking for her arrival. Moreover, she was sadly afraid lest the squire had gone off with the idea that she did not want to come—that she preferred that stupid, stupid party at the Cockerells'. Mrs. Gibson, too, was sorry; she had an uncomfortable consciousness of having given way to temper before a stranger, and a stranger, too, whose good opinion she had meant to cultivate: and she was also annoyed at Molly's tearful face.

"What can I do for you, to bring you back into good temper?" she said. "First, you insist upon your knowing Lady Harriet better than I do—I, who have known her for eighteen or nineteen years at least. Then you jump at invitations without ever consulting me, or thinking of how awkward it would be for me to go stumping into a drawing-room all by myself; following my new name, too, which always makes me feel uncomfortable, it is such a sad come-down after Kirkpatrick! And then, when I offer you some of the prettiest things I have got, you say it does not signify how you are dressed. What can I do to please you, Molly?"

I, who delight in nothing more than peace in a family, to see you sitting there with despair upon your face?"

Molly could stand it no longer; she went upstairs to her own room —her own smart new room, which hardly yet seemed a familiar place; and began to cry so heartily and for so long a time, that she stopped at length for very weariness. She thought of Mrs. Hamley wearying for her; of the old Hall whose very quietness might become oppressive to an ailing person; of the trust the squire had had in her that she would come off directly with him. And all this oppressed her much more than the querulousness of her stepmother's words.

CHAPTER XVII.

TROUBLE AT HAMLEY HALL.

IF Molly thought that peace dwelt perpetually at Hamley Hall she was sorely mistaken. Something was out of tune in the whole establishment; and, for a very unusual thing, the common irritation seemed to have produced a common bond. All the servants were old in their places, and were told by some one of the family, or gathered, from the unheeded conversation carried on before them, everything that affected master or mistress or either of the young gentlemen. Any one of them could have told Molly that the grievance which lay at the root of everything, was the amount of the bills run up by Osborne at Cambridge, and which, now that all chance of his obtaining a fellowship was over, came pouring down upon the squire. But Molly, confident of being told by Mrs. Hamley herself anything which she wished her to hear, encouraged no confidences from any one else.

She was struck with the change in "madam's" looks as soon as she caught sight of her in the darkened room, lying on the sofa in her dressing-room, all dressed in white, which almost rivalled the white wanness of her face. The squire ushered Molly in with,—

"Here she is at last!" and Molly had scarcely imagined that he had so much variety in the tones of his voice—the beginning of the sentence was spoken in a loud congratulatory manner, while the last words were scarcely audible. He had seen the death-like pallor on his wife's face; not a new sight, and one which had been presented to him gradually enough, but which was now always giving him a fresh shock. It was a lovely tranquil winter's day; every branch and every twig of the trees and shrubs were glittering with drops of the sun-melted hoarfrost; a robin was perched on a holly-bush, piping cheerily; but the blinds were down, and out of Mrs. Hamley's windows nothing of all this was to be seen. There was even a large screen placed between her and the wood-fire, to keep off that cheerful blaze. Mrs. Hamley stretched out one hand to Molly, and held hers firm; with the other she shaded her eyes.

"She is not so well this morning," said the squire, shaking his head. "But never fear, my dear one; here's the doctor's daughter, nearly as good as the doctor himself. Have you had your medicine? Your beef-tea?" he continued, going about on heavy tiptoe and peeping into every empty cup and glass. Then he returned to the sofa; looked at her for a minute or two, and then softly kissed her, and told Molly he would leave her in charge.

As if Mrs. Hamley was afraid of Molly's remarks or questions, she began in her turn a hasty system of interrogatories.

"Now, dear child, tell me all; it's no breach of confidence, for I shan't mention it again, and I shan't be here long. How does it all go on—the new mother, the good resolutions? let me help you if I can. I think with a girl I could have been of use—a mother does not know boys. But tell me anything you like and will; don't be afraid of details."

Even with Molly's small experience of illness she saw how much of restless fever there was in this speech; and instinct, or some such gift, prompted her to tell a long story of many things—the wedding-day, her visit to Miss Brownings', the new furniture, Lady Harriet, &c., all in an easy flow of talk which was very soothing to Mrs. Hamley, inasmuch as it gave her something to think about beyond her own immediate sorrows. But Molly did not speak of her own grievances, nor of the new domestic relationship. Mrs. Hamley noticed this.

"And you and Mrs. Gibson get on happily together?"

"Not always," said Molly. "You know we didn't know much of each other before we were put to live together."

"I didn't like what the squire told me last night. He was very angry."

That sore had not yet healed over; but Molly resolutely kept silence, beating her brains to think of some other subject of conversation.

"Ah! I see, Molly," said Mrs. Hamley; "you won't tell me your sorrows, and yet, perhaps, I could have done you some good."

"I don't like," said Molly, in a low voice. "I think papa wouldn't like it. And, besides, you have helped me so much—you and Mr. Roger Hamley. I often think of the things he said; they come in so usefully, and are such a strength to me."

"Ah, Reger! yes. He is to be trusted. Oh, Molly! I've a great deal to say to you myself, only not now. I must have my medicine and try to go to sleep. Good girl! You are stronger than I am, and can do without sympathy."

Molly was taken to another room; the maid who conducted her to it told her that Mrs. Hamley had not wished her to have her nights disturbed, as they might very probably have been if she had been in her former sleeping-room. In the afternoon Mrs. Hamley sent for her, and with the want of reticence common to invalids, especially to those suffering from long and depressing maladies, she told Molly of the family distress and disappointment.

She made Molly sit down near her on a little stool, and, holding her hand, and looking into her eyes to catch her spoken sympathy from their expression quicker than she could from her words, she said,—

“ Osborne has so disappointed us! I cannot understand it yet. And the squire was so terribly angry! I cannot think how all the money was spent—advances through money-lenders, besides bills. The squire does not show me how angry he is now, because he’s afraid of another attack; but I know how angry he is. You see he has been spending ever so much money in reclaiming that land at Upton Common, and is very hard pressed himself. But it would have doubled the value of the estate, and so we never thought anything of economies which would benefit Osborne in the long run. And now the squire says he must mortgage some of the land; and you can’t think how it cuts him to the heart. He sold a great deal of timber to send the two boys to college. Osborne—oh! what a dear, innocent boy he was: he was the heir, you know; and he was so clever, every one said he was sure of honours and a fellowship, and I don’t know what all; and he did get a scholarship, and then all went wrong. I don’t know how. That is the worst. Perhaps the squire wrote too angrily, and that stopped up confidence. But he might have told me. He would have done, I think, Molly, if he had been here, face to face with me. But the squire, in his anger, told him not to show his face at home till he had paid off the debts he had incurred out of his allowance. Out of two hundred and fifty a year to pay off more than nine hundred, one way or another! And not to come home till then! Perhaps Roger will have debts too! He had but two hundred; but, then, he was not the eldest son. The squire has given orders that the men are to be turned off the draining-works; and I lie awake thinking of their poor families this wintry weather. But what shall we do? I’ve never been strong, and, perhaps, I’ve been extravagant in my habits; and there were family traditions as to expenditure, and the reclaiming of this land. Oh! Molly, Osborne was such a sweet little baby, and such a loving boy: so clever, too! You know I read you some of his poetry: now, could a person who wrote like that do anything very wrong? And yet I’m afraid he has.”

“ Don’t you know, at all, how the money has gone? ” asked Molly.

“ No! not at all. That’s the sting. There are tailors’ bills, and bills for book-binding and wine and pictures—those come to four or five hundred; and though this expenditure is extraordinary—inexplicable to such simple old folk as we are—yet it may be only the luxury of the present day. But the money for which he will give no account,—of which, indeed, we only heard through the squire’s London agents, who found out that certain disreputable attorneys were making inquiries as to the entail of the estate;—oh! Molly, worse than all—I don’t know how to bring myself to tell you—as to the age and health of the squire, his dear father”—(she began to sob almost hysterically; yet she would go on talking, in spite of Molly’s efforts to stop her)—“ who held him in his arms, and blessed him, even before I had kissed him; and thought always so much of him as his

heir and first-born darling. How he has loved him! How I have loved him! I sometimes have thought of late that we've almost done that good Roger injustice."

"No! I'm sure you've not: only look at the way he loves you. Why, you are his first thought: he may not speak about it, but any one may see it. And dear, dear Mrs. Hamley," said Molly, determined to say out all that was in her mind now that she had once got the word, "don't you think that it would be better not to misjudge Mr. Osborne Hamley? We don't know what he has done with the money: he is so good (is he not?) that he may have wanted it to relieve some poor person—some tradesman, for instance, pressed by creditors—some —"

"You forget, dear," said Mrs. Hamley, smiling a little at the girl's impetuous romance, but sighing the next instant, "that all the other bills come from tradesmen, who complain piteously of being kept out of their money."

Molly was nonplussed for the moment; but then she said,—

"I daresay they imposed upon him. I'm sure I've heard stories of young men being made regular victims of by the shopkeepers in great towns."

"You're a great darling, child," said Mrs. Hamley, comforted by Molly's strong partisanship, unreasonable and ignorant though it was.

"And, besides," continued Molly, "some one must be acting wrongly in Osborne's—Mr. Osborne Hamley's, I mean—I can't help saying Osborne sometimes, but, indeed, I always think of him as Mr. Osborne —"

"Never mind, Molly, what you call him; only go on talking. It seems to do me good to hear the hopeful side taken. The squire has been so hurt and displeased: strange-looking men coming into the neighbourhood, too, questioning the tenants, and grumbling about the last fall of timber, as if they were calculating on the squire's death."

"That's just what I was going to speak about. Doesn't it show that they are bad men? and would bad men scruple to impose upon him, and to tell lies in his name, and to ruin him?"

"Don't you see, you only make him out weak, instead of wicked?"

"Yes; perhaps I do. But I don't think he is weak. You know yourself, dear Mrs. Hamley, how very clever he really is. Besides, I would rather he was weak than wicked. Weak people may find themselves all at once strong in heaven, when they see things quite clearly; but I don't think the wicked will turn themselves into virtuous people all at once."

"I think I've been very weak, Molly," said Mrs. Hamley, stroking Molly's curls affectionately. "I've made such an idol of my beautiful Osborne; and he turns out to have feet of clay, not strong enough to stand firm on the ground. And that's the best view of his conduct, too!"

What with his anger against his son, and his anxiety about his wife: the difficulty of raising the money immediately required, and his irrita-

tion at the scarce-concealed inquiries made by strangers as to the value of his property, the poor squire was in a sad state. He was angry and impatient with every one who came near him; and then was depressed at his own violent temper and unjust words. The old servants, who, perhaps, cheated him in many small things, were beautifully patient under his upbraiding. They could understand bursts of passion, and knew the cause of his variable moods as well as he did himself. The butler, who was accustomed to argue with his master about every fresh direction as to his work, now nudged Molly at dinner-time to make her eat of some dish which she had just been declining, and explained his conduct afterwards as follows,—

" You see, miss, me and cook had planned a dinner as would tempt master to eat; but when you say, 'No, thank you,' when I hand you anything, master never so much as looks at it. But if you take a thing, and eats with a relish, why first he waits, and then he looks, and by and by he smells; and then he finds out as he's hungry, and falls to eating as natural as a kitten takes to mewling. That's the reason, miss, as I gave you a nudge and a wink, which no one knows better nor me was not manners."

Osborne's name was never mentioned during these *tête-à-tête* meals. The squire asked Molly questions about Hollingsford people, but did not seem much to attend to her answers. He used also to ask her every day how she thought that his wife was; but if Molly told the truth—that every day seemed to make her weaker and weaker—he was almost savage with the girl. He could not bear it; and he would not. Nay, once he was on the point of dismissing Mr. Gibson because he insisted on a consultation with Dr. Nicholls, the great physician of the county.

" It's nonsense thinking her so ill as that—you know it's only the delicacy she's had for years; and if you can't do her any good in such a simple case—no pain—only weakness and nervousness—it is a simple case, eh?—don't look in that puzzled way, man!—you'd better give her up altogether, and I'll take her to Bath or Brighton, or somewhere for change, for in my opinion it's only moping and nervousness."

But the squire's bluff florid face was pinched with anxiety, and worn with the effort of being deaf to the footsteps of fate as he said these words which belied his fears.

Mr. Gibson replied very quietly,—

" I shall go on coming to see her, and I know you will not forbid my visits. But I shall bring Dr. Nicholls with me the next time I come. I may be mistaken in my treatment; and I wish to God he may say I am mistaken in my apprehensions."

" Don't tell me them! I cannot bear them!" cried the squire. " Of course we must all die; and she must too. But not the cleverest doctor in England shall go about coolly meting out the life of such as her. I dare say I shall die first. I hope I shall. But I'll knock any one down who speaks to me of death sitting within me. And, besides, I think all

doctors are ignorant quacks, pretending to knowledge they haven't got. Ay, you may smile at me. I don't care. Unless you can tell me I shall die first, neither you nor your Dr. Nicholls shall come prophesying and croaking about this house."

Mr. Gibson went away, heavy at heart at the thought of Mrs. Hamley's approaching death, but thinking little enough of the squire's speeches. He had almost forgotten them, in fact, when about nine o'clock that evening, a groom rode in from Hamley Hall in hot haste, with a note from the squire.

DEAR GIBSON,—For God's sake forgive me if I was rude to-day. She is much worse. Come and spend the night here. Write for Nicholls, and all the physicians you want. Write before you start off here. They may give her ease. There were Whitworth doctors much talked of in my youth for curing people given up by the regular doctors; can't you get one of them? I put myself in your hands. Sometimes I think it is the turning point, and she'll rally after this bout. I trust all to you.

Yours ever,

R. HAMLEY.

Of course Mr. Gibson went; for the first time since his marriage cutting short Mrs. Gibson's querulous lamentations over her life, as involved in that of a doctor called out at all hours of day and night.

He brought Mrs. Hamley through this attack; and for a day or two the squire's alarm and gratitude made him docile in Mr. Gibson's hands. Then he returned to the idea of its being a crisis through which his wife had passed; and that she was now on the way to recovery. But the day after the consultation with Dr. Nicholls, Mr. Gibson said to Molly,—

"Molly! I've written to Osborne and Roger. Do you know Osborne's address?"

"No, papa. He's in disgrace. I don't know if the squire knows; and she has been too ill to write."

"Never mind. I'll enclose it to Roger; whatever those lads may be to others, there's a strong brotherly love as ever I saw, between the two. Roger will know. And, Molly, they are sure to come home as soon as they hear my report of their mother's state. I wish you'd tell the squire what I've done. It's not a pleasant piece of work; and I'll tell madam myself in my own way. I'd have told him if he'd been at home; but you say he was obliged to go to Ashecombe on business."

"Quite obliged. He was so sorry to miss you. But, papa, he will be so angry! You don't know how mad he is against Osborne."

Molly dreaded the squire's anger when she gave him her father's message. She had seen quite enough of the domestic relations of the Hamley family to understand that, underneath his old-fashioned courtesy, and the pleasant hospitality he showed to her as a guest, there was a strong will, and a vehement passionate temper, along with that degree of obstinacy in prejudices (or "opinions," as he would have called them) so common to those who have, neither in youth nor in manhood, mixed largely with their kind. She had listened, day after day, to Mrs. Hamley's

plaintive murmurs as to the deep disgrace in which Osborne was being held by his father—the prohibition of his coming home; and she hardly knew how to begin to tell him that the letter summoning Osborne had already been sent off.

Their dinners were tête-à-tête. The squire tried to make them pleasant to Molly, feeling deeply grateful to her for the soothing comfort she was to his wife. He made merry speeches, which sank away into silence, and at which they each forgot to smile. He ordered up rare wines, which she did not care for, but tasted out of complaisance. He noticed that one day she had eaten some brown beurré pears as if she liked them ; and as his trees had not produced many this year, he gave directions that this particular kind should be sought for through the neighbourhood. Molly felt that, in many ways, he was full of good-will towards her; but it did not diminish her dread of touching on the one sore point in the family. However, it had to be done, and that without delay.

The great log was placed on the after-dinner fire, the hearth swept up, the ponderous candles snuffed, and then the door was shut, and Molly and the squire were left to their dessert. She sat at the side of the table in her old place. That at the head was vacant; yet as no orders had been given to the contrary, the plate and glasses and napkin were always arranged as regularly and methodically as if Mrs. Hamley would come in as usual. Indeed, sometimes, when the door by which she used to enter was opened by any chance, Molly caught herself looking round as if she expected to see the tall, languid figure in the elegant draperies of rich silks and soft lace, which Mrs. Hamley was wont to wear of an evening.

This evening, it struck her, as a new thought of pain, that into that room she would come no more. She had fixed to give her father's message at this very point of time; but something in her throat choked her, and she hardly knew how to govern her voice. The squire got up and went to the broad fire-place, to strike into the middle of the great log, and split it up into blazing, sparkling pieces. His back was towards her. Molly began, "When papa was here to-day, he bade me tell you he had written to Mr. Roger Hamley to say that—that he thought he had better come home ; and he enclosed a letter to Mr. Osborne Hamley to say the same thing."

The squire put down the poker, but he still kept his back to Molly.

"He sent for Osborne and Roger ?" he asked, at length.

Molly answered, "Yes."

Then there was a dead silence, which Molly thought would never end. The squire had placed his two hands on the high chimney-piece, and stood leaning over the fire.

"Roger would have been down from Cambridge on the 18th," said he. "And he has sent for Osborne, too ! Did he know,"—he continued, turning round to Molly, with something of the fierceness she had anticipated in voice and look. In another moment he had dropped his voice. "It is right, quite right. I understand. It has come at length. Come !

come ! Osborne has brought it on, though," with a fresh access of anger in his tones. "She might have" (some word Molly could not hear—she thought it sounded like "lingered") "but for that. I cannot forgive him; I cannot."

And then he suddenly left the room. While Molly sat there still, very sad in her sympathy with all, he put his head in again,—

"Go to her, my dear; I cannot—not just yet. But I will soon. Just this bit; and after that I won't lose a moment. You are a good girl. God bless you!"

It is not to be supposed that Molly had remained all this time at the hall without interruption. Once or twice her father had brought her a summons home. Molly thought she could perceive that he had brought it unwillingly; in fact, it was Mrs. Gibson that had sent for her, almost, as it were, to preserve a "right of way" through her actions.

"You shall come back to-morrow, or the next day," her father had said. "But mamma seems to think people will put a bad construction on your being so much away from home so soon after our marriage."

"Oh, papa, I'm afraid Mrs. Hamley will miss me! I do so like being with her."

"I don't think it is likely she will miss you as much as she would have done a month or two ago. She sleeps so much now, that she is scarcely conscious of the lapse of time. I'll see that you come back here again in a day or two."

So out of the silence and the soft melancholy of the Hall Molly returned into the all-pervading element of chatter and gossip at Hollingsford. Mrs. Gibson received her kindly enough. Once she had a smart new winter bonnet ready to give her as a present; but she did not care to hear any particulars about the friends whom Molly had just left; and her few remarks on the state of affairs at the Hall jarred terribly on the sensitive Molly.

"What a time she lingers! Your papa never expected she would last half so long after that attack. It must be very wearing work to them all; I declare you look quite another creature since you were there. One can only wish it mayn't last, for their sakes."

"You don't know how the squire values every minute," said Molly.

"Why, you say she sleeps a great deal, and doesn't talk much when she's awake, and there's not the slightest hope for her. And yet, at such times, people are kept on the tenter-hooks with watching and waiting. I know it by my dear Kirkpatrick. There really were days when I thought it never would end. But we won't talk any more of such dismal things; you've had quite enough of them, I'm sure, and it always makes me melancholy to hear of illness and death; and yet your papa seems sometimes as if he could talk of nothing else. I'm going to take you out to-night, though, and that will give you something of a change; and I've been getting Miss Rose to trim up one of my old gowns for you; it's too tight for me. There's some talk of dancing,—it's at Mrs. Edward's."

"Oh, mamma, I cannot go!" cried Molly. "I've been so much with her; and she may be suffering so, or even dying—and I to be dancing!"

"Nonsense! You're no relation, so you need not feel it so much. I wouldn't urge you, if she was likely to know about it and be hurt; but as it is, it's all fixed that you are to go; and don't let us have any nonsense about it. We might sit twirling our thumbs, and repeating hymns all our lives long, if we were to do nothing else when people were dying."

"I cannot go," repeated Molly. And, acting upon impulse, and almost to her own surprise, she appealed to her father, who came into the room at this very time. He contracted his dark eyebrows, and looked annoyed as both wife and daughter poured their different sides of the argument into his ears. He sat down in desperation of patience. When his turn came to pronounce a decision, he said,—

"I suppose I can have some lunch? I went away at six this morning, and there's nothing in the dining-room. I have to go off again directly."

Molly started to the door; Mrs. Gibson made haste to ring the bell.

"Where are you going, Molly?" said she, sharply.

"Only to see about papa's lunch."

"There are servants to do it; and I don't like your going into the kitchen."

"Come, Molly! sit down and be quiet," said her father. "One comes home wanting peace and quietness—and food too. If I am to be appealed to, which I beg I may not be another time, I settle that Molly stops at home this evening. I shall come back late and tired. See that I have something ready to eat, goosey, and then I'll dress myself up in my best, and go and fetch you home, my dear. I wish all these wedding festivities were well over. Ready, is it? Then I'll go into the dining-room and gorge myself. A doctor ought to be able to eat like a camel, or like Major Dugald Dalgetty."

It was well for Molly that callers came in just at this time, for Mrs. Gibson was extremely annoyed. They told her some little local piece of news, however, which filled up her mind; and Molly found that, if she only expressed wonder enough at the engagement they had both heard of from the departed callers, the previous discussion as to her accompanying her stepmother or not might be entirely passed over. Not entirely though; for the next morning she had to listen to a very brilliantly touched-up account of the dance and the gaiety which she had missed; and also to be told that Mrs. Gibson had changed her mind about giving her the gown, and thought now that she should reserve it for Cynthia, if only it was long enough; but Cynthia was so tall—quite overgrown, in fact. The chances seemed equally balanced as to whether Molly might not have the gown after all.

The Story of my Escape from Futtelghur.



S the object of the following pages is limited to a narrative of personal adventure, I shall forbear any discussion on the origin and progress of the great Mutiny of the Native Indian army in 1857, and shall strictly confine myself to a relation of facts connected with the outbreak at Futtelghur, and my own providential escape from its fatal consequences. But before proceeding with the narrative, I may briefly notice the infatuation exhibited by the European residents in neglecting to remove their wives and families to a place of refuge, before the rapid spread of the insurrection, under the mistaken notion that such a show of confidence might avert the threatened danger, and eventually save Futtelghur. Subsequent events, however, soon dispelled this illusion, and left them unprepared for the emergency when their best energies were required to meet it. In the confusion which followed, no two persons were found to concur in a scheme either for defence or escape; and this utter absence of concert undoubtedly contributed to the success of the insurgents, and to the dire fate of their innocent victims. Nor were any capable of acting for themselves: non-officials naturally looked up to the authorities, and subordinates to their superiors, for decision and action; but as the civil and military were divided in opinion, neither would accept the responsibility of acting singly. In this state of disunion and confusion, surrounded by imminent peril, people were driven to the most deplorable condition of terror—till at length the instinct of self-preservation led them to take to boats on the Ganges, in order to be prepared to drop down the river to Cawnpore at a moment's notice. That, indeed, had now become the only available chance of escape, as all the roads leading to Agra, Meerut, &c. had long been closed, and were, moreover, infested by bands of rebels and dacoits, who made no distinction between friend and foe.

On the 4th of June intelligence of the mutiny of the 9th N. I. at Allyghur reached the station, and the announcement that they were

marching towards Futtehghur to induce the 10th Regiment to fraternize with them drove people to the boats, there to await the further issue of events. At nightfall still more alarming rumours were circulated through the bazar, and the budmashes, who were ripe for mischief, added to the general dismay by firing matchlocks in every direction, the discharges rapidly increasing as these signals were taken up from village to village. The natives were worked up to the highest pitch of excitement, and in the midst of the prevailing tumult the sepoys seized their arms, and brought matters to a crisis by downright mutiny. *Sauve qui peut* was now the order of the day, or rather of the night, and one by one, as the preconcerted signal was communicated from boat to boat, did the little fleet move on, in ominous gloom, in the delusive hope of finding a safe haven at Cawnpore.

Scarcely had ten miles of the voyage been accomplished when we were beset with difficulties and dangers altogether unforeseen. Villages hitherto peaceful had risen in arms, and under the impression that we carried our valuables with us determined to oppose our onward progress. At Koosoomkhore, a large village occupying a commanding position on the right bank of the Ganges, and inhabited by a mixed population of Hindoos and Mohammedans, we were met with a shower of matchlock and jingal balls, and peremptorily called upon to surrender under threat of annihilation ; but the guard of matchlockmen, who had been provided as our escort by Hurdeobuksh, a powerful zemindar of Oude, together with our own sporting rifles and guns, answered the salute by a brisk fire, and we rapidly pulled past the place without sustaining any serious damage. Reasonably judging, however, that this adventure was the mere prelude to more dangers, and acting under the advice of Hurdeobuksh's men, we put to shore in order to confer on the advisability of continuing the voyage, or of accepting Hurdeobuksh's protection until a more favourable opportunity offered for prosecuting it.

The numerous instances of treachery which had come to our knowledge since the outbreak of the mutiny had greatly shaken our confidence in the friendly professions of the natives, and made us cautious how we placed ourselves within their power. In the present case few among our number were disposed to lend an ear to their proposal, the majority regarding the offer as a pretext to ensnare the entire party. Only forty, indeed, out of upwards of two hundred souls, eventually accepted the protection offered by Hurdeobuksh, who had now arrived in person ; and while the party of which I formed one prepared to quit the Ramgunga, the other resolved to risk the chance of proceeding to Cawnpore in spite of the friendly remonstrances and warnings of Hurdeobuksh and his people. Their deplorable fate may be summed up, by anticipation, in a few words. After encountering a series of dangers and trials for seven or eight days, the doomed band hove in sight of Cawnpore, and on hearing the booming of heavy siege guns, which painfully betrayed their critical position, sought shelter on an adjacent island. They now learned, to

their increased dismay, that the bridge of boats which spanned the river was occupied by the rebels, whereby the only chance of escape to Allahabad was completely cut off. Next day the fugitives were discovered and attacked by a large force of sepoys, and compelled to surrender without offering any resistance. No sooner, however, had they surrendered their arms, than, contrary to the solemn assurances of the Nana that their lives should be spared, the men were forthwith separated from the women, and cruelly shot in the presence of their wives and families, the latter being subsequently led away to suffer a still more shocking fate at the hands of their captors. The poor helpless creatures were placed in carts and driven into Cawnpore, where it is known that these fiends perpetrated their brutal massacre in the presence of the very garrison whose protection they had fled to seek. Thus perished every soul of that unhappy party, which constituted the bulk of the European community at Futtehghur, comprising missionaries, indigo-planters, government clerks, tradesmen, &c., while greater troubles and a similar fate were reserved for us—with two solitary exceptions—who for the time being had escaped the vengeance of the insurgents.

After two days' towing, those who had availed themselves of Hurdeo-buksh's protection, about forty persons in all, among whom were Colonel Tucker, three officers of the 10th N. I., Mr. Thornhill, judge of Futtehghur, Mr. Probyn, magistrate, my brother (an indigo-planter), and myself, together with their families, reached a dilapidated old building which they called a *ghurree*, or fort, situated in the midst of a jungle. To our extreme mortification, neither the exterior nor the interior of the place offered any facilities for defence. Contrary, however, to all expectation, after the arrival of three officers who had joined our fleet the day following our departure from the station, and who had reported the mutiny of the 10th N. I., we were greeted with the welcome tidings that the sepoys had remained staunch. The details which subsequently transpired were to the effect that, during the terrible excitement on the night of the 4th of June, when the 9th Regiment was momentarily expected to enter Futtehghur, the 10th rose in anticipation, seized the treasure, and threatened the lives of the officers. But the devoted gallantry of Colonel Smith, the commandant, and of Captain Vibart of the 2nd Cavalry, who had been detained at the station on account of the mutiny, and who served as a volunteer under the colonel, eventually succeeded in quelling the disturbance and in bringing back the sepoys to their duty. Meanwhile the 9th, who had probably received conflicting reports of the conduct of the 10th, and whose sincerity they doubted, regarding them as outcasts because they had crossed the sea on a voyage to and from Burmah, prudently departed from the vicinity of Futtehghur to join the rendezvous of the rebels at Delhi.

This intelligence was reassuring, and in the joy of the moment we forgot all our anxieties. Probyn and the three officers of the 10th immediately prepared to return to the station, the latter to rejoin their regiment,

and the former to ascertain the real state of affairs before removing the ladies and children from the *ghurree*, which, untenable as it appeared, was nevertheless considered a safer place of refuge than a station garrisoned by doubtful troops. During the absence of Probyn—who from his position and friendship with Hurdeobuksh was regarded as the head of the party,—much dissatisfaction was felt with the miserable accommodation of the fort. This, coupled with the favourable accounts which came from Futtehghur, induced us to decide on returning to the station without the knowledge of Probyn, who unexpectedly rejoined us and was amazed to find that we were prepared to leave Hurdeobuksh's protection. In vain he expostulated on the rashness of the move; in vain he pointed out the risk of placing any reliance on the premises of the sepoys, who since their late mutinous conduct had renewed the oath of allegiance on the condition that they should not be called upon to act against their comrades. Resolved, however, not to place his own family in jeopardy, Probyn resigned himself to the promised protection of Hurdeobuksh, and was joined therein by Mr. Edwards, a fugitive from Budaon, who had arrived a day or two before.

On reaching Futtehghur we found affairs wearing a much more satisfactory aspect than we had been led to anticipate; our spirits were revived, and we began to indulge the hope that, in spite of Probyn's gloomy forebodings, we should weather the storm which was agitating every part of that vast empire. Our fears, however, had been barely lulled into repose, when all sense of security suddenly vanished at the intelligence that the 41st N. I. intended visiting Futtehghur on their way to Delhi. (This corps had already murdered their own officers, and plundered Shahjehanpore.) Every precaution was immediately taken to prevent the rebels from crossing the Ganges: the bridge of boats was destroyed, as also every detached boat within several miles on either side of the river. To a casual observer, the sepoy displayed genuine alacrity in this service; but those experienced in native character saw, in this very circumstance, the withering of all their hopes. Two days passed in profound suspense; on the third our worst fears were terribly realized. On the memorable 18th of June, the 41st, after performing a circuitous journey, crossed the river and entered Furrukabad, where they raised the standard of rebellion, and proclaimed the Nawab Tuffuzul Hoosain Khan ruler of the province. The 10th, who had been in communication with them whilst deceiving us with a display of zealous loyalty, anxious to secure the treasure which they had retained since the 4th of June, warned off their officers, and plundered the money before the 41st could arrive to claim a share. They next proceeded to liberate the gaol prisoners, offering us no molestation, but leaving us completely at the mercy of the invaders and the fanatic rabble of the Nawab.

At daybreak of the morning above mentioned, when most of us lay slumbering in the open within the fort on the bank of the river, where we were in the habit of meeting since our return from Hurdeobuksh's, an

officer arrived almost breathless from the sepoy lines, with a countenance which betrayed the utmost consternation, and announced the direful news that the 10th had mutinied. The alarm produced defies description. We were at the time in presence of a strong detachment of the regiment, which garrisoned the fort; and therefore our movements were paralyzed: we were reduced to utter helplessness. Contrary to all expectations, the men began to leave the fort in small numbers, and in a few minutes the entire body departed, leaving us in sole possession. Not a moment was lost in taking measures to protect the ladies and children, whom it was impossible, with our small numbers, to escort to Agra or to any other place of safety. We were now joined by Colonel Smith, who at the imminent peril of his life had used every effort to recall his men to a sense of their duty, exposing himself with reckless bravery to an infuriated soldiery in open and armed rebellion. He came accompanied by three or four of his most attached men, who stood around him sobbing like children. They implored permission to remain with him, but yielding at length to the colonel's wishes, they mournfully departed. The gates were now closed, and a 24-pounder howitzer charged with bags of scrap-metal was hurriedly drawn into position to guard the passage. The garrison, consisting of thirty-five men, young and old, was then mustered and divided into three bodies, under the command of Colonels Goldie, Smith, and Tucker, and measures were immediately adopted to render the post defensible.

Before proceeding with my narrative, I shall attempt to convey a general idea of the nature and extent of this fort. Futtehghur, the Fort of Victory, from which the European station takes its name, is situated on the right bank of the Ganges, on a bend of the river, about three miles distant from Furrukabad. It is a quadrilateral mud building, defended by a dozen or more semicircular bastions thrown out before the angles and faces. The walls rise about fifteen feet above the ground level, averaging from nine to ten feet in thickness, surmounted on three sides by a dry ditch, and on the fourth by the Ganges. The enclosed area measures from fifteen to twenty acres, the whole of which was occupied by the workshops of the Gun-carriage Agency, the residences of the agent and engineer, and a small graveyard. The old fort had long been dismantled of its armament, and deprived of all pretence of fortification save the bastions and breastworks. The difficulty, under our circumstances, of rendering a place of such formidable dimensions defensible, may readily be imagined. Suffice it to say, that we mounted sham guns on several of the bastions, and dragged up a few of the lighter field-pieces, which were discovered in the Model Room, and placed them in newly-cut embrasures in the most commanding positions. In lieu of regular charges, a few rounds were improvised out of some blank musket-cartridges, while scrap-iron wrapped in canvas-bags served for grape, and sledge-hammers for round-shot. The above, together with some seven or eight thousand rounds of musket ammunition, constituted our entire magazine, with which we prepared to

defend ourselves, as no hope could be entertained of receiving succour either from Agra, Meerut, or Cawnpore.

Whether through ignorance of our numerical strength, or through fear of risking an attack against Englishmen occupying what may have appeared to them a strong position, the 41st and their allies did not venture on an advance for several days, but employed the interval in concentrating their forces, and in making vast preparations to annihilate us at a stroke. Meanwhile threats and promises were alternately made to induce us to surrender; but their treachery was too palpable and their ultimate object too obvious to admit of negotiation. The time, thus wasted by them in abortive schemes to delude their intended victims, was devoted by us to the strengthening of our position, and we moreover succeeded in obtaining a supply of provisions from an adjacent village. It was while we were busily employed in demolishing some houses and walls which interfered with the action of our guns, that the enemy made their first hostile movement by sending a strong party of sepoyos, who drove off our coolies and occupied the position.

On the 26th of June, the day following, while it was yet dark, the enemy advanced in full force and commenced the attack with a discharge of artillery. The sudden booming of the guns and whizzing of the shot wide over our heads startled all sleepers, and sent them to their posts, painfully harassed with a sense of inevitable doom. None, indeed, could entertain the hope of surviving that day against such fearful odds, provided, as it was said they were, with fifty scaling-ladders, and bent on a simultaneous assault from every available quarter, whilst we could only spare one or two men for each of the flank bastions, and five or six for the angles and other weak points. After wasting some twenty rounds in the dark, the rebels ceased firing, but at daybreak resumed their work. The ladders were now hurried forward, covered by skirmishers, and the scene was enlivened by the cavalry, which trotted briskly on and occupied the roads on the flanks. "Reserve your fire and be careful of your ammunition," was the order passed round to the posts as the sharp rattle of musketry rent the air and chilled our blood. On they came, yelling and gesticulating, and emboldened by our reserve dashed forward in the hope of securing the ground before we could make any effectual resistance. But they were mistaken; our guns opened fire, and our musketry began to play with good effect on the scaling parties, who dropped their unwieldy burdens and fled, after a few abortive attempts to use them on points from which our fire was temporarily diverted. We were not so fortunate, however, in another direction, for the enemy soon discovered our weakest points, and succeeded in placing three ladders against a single bastion, where they as nearly as possible obtained a footing. Happily the ladders proved a few feet too short, but the swords of the assailants, glittering in the sunshine, betrayed our danger, and in a moment we hurled upon them the huge logs of timber which had been piled to raise the breastwork, completing the repulse by a few discharges

of shot, and taking possession of the ladders. The contest had raged with unabated fury for two hours, when the enemy began to waver. Shortly after they withdrew, leaving a number of their dead scattered in all directions.

The attack was resumed in the afternoon, but the failure of the morning had damped the ardour of the assailants, and we found much less difficulty in withstanding it. As their attempts against the fort became more and more feeble, so our hopes began to revive. The intelligence brought by our spies tended to confirm this hope, for discontent was rife among them, and desertions numerous. Our casualties thus far were trifling, notwithstanding the incessant fire maintained against us night and day, allowing us no intervals of peace, and forbidding sleep, except in snatches, under fatigue and exposure; but our spirits were buoyant, and the favourable aspect of affairs enabled us to endure these trials cheerily. Unhappily for us, the Nawab of Furrukabad—who was personally interested in the expulsion of the English, the stability of his Nawabdom depending on it—observing that the courage of the sepoys began to flag, summoned to their aid the Pathans of Shumshabad, Mhow, and other places; and after exciting a spirit of rivalry between the different parties, and stimulating them by the promise of a lac of rupees to the captors, sent the whole body against us.

Thus reinforced by a host of fanatical Mussulmans accustomed from infancy to the exercise of arms, with the prospect of a splendid prize and rich booty before them, the combined rebels advanced to the attack confident of success, conducting their operations much more systematically than before. In the first place, all the lofty houses of the village adjoining the fort, and commanding the interior of our positions, were occupied by the rifle companies of the 41st, and, whilst our attention was directed to the manœuvres of the artillery and cavalry, the assaulting-parties, composed mainly of Pathans, and led by a daring fanatic, rushed to the ladders. Seizing these, they pressed forward to the defences, heedless for a while of the havoc which our musketry made among them, but eventually giving way and retiring in the utmost confusion. The encounter was a severe one, and but for the supply of six or eight muskets which each of us kept ready primed and loaded for instant use, it is very doubtful whether we could have checked the determined onset of a force sixty times superior to our own. However, after a sharp conflict of two hours, we had the satisfaction of seeing the assailants retire under cover. The riflemen had done considerable mischief, and rendered several of our posts untenable; nearly all our ammunition was expended, which rendered us incapable of effectual retaliation; and, to add to these drawbacks, several of our best men had been placed *hors de combat*. Nevertheless, we had stubbornly held our own, and, in spite of the overwhelming odds against us, had been invariably successful in repulsing the rebels, till at length they seem to have come to the conclusion that a change of tactics was necessary, and that more insidious measures must be used in order to

place the fort in their hands. To effect this without exciting our suspicion, the usual assaults were continued daily, but in the form of feints, and the alarms were doubled during the night to keep us ever on the alert, and thereby to weary out our posts. Meanwhile, their designs were being carried out in the dark; approaches were stealthily cut, whereby they obtained a footing in an adjacent wood-yard, the walls of which they easily perforated. Then swarming within in hundreds they attacked the fort walls, baffling all our efforts to dislodge them. Captain Vibart volunteered with two or three others to lead a night sortie against them; but the feebleness of our numbers forbade such a sacrifice, and Colonel Smith could not be induced to sanction the attempt. A more happy suggestion to fire the wood in the yard was carried out with signal success. A thatched sentry-box was immediately taken down, besmeared with coal-tar, ignited, and thrown on the heaps of fire-wood below. In the course of half-an-hour the whole was in a blaze, and the hissing flames reaching the logs which had been piled to raise the breastwork, nearly drove the picket from its position. During the conflagration, which lasted twenty-four hours, and smouldered till the end of our tenure, several unfinished mines exploded, and sent up dense volumes of smoke, betraying at once the secret tactics of the enemy. Defeated in a plan which promised easy and certain success, the rebels fell back greatly disheartened; but the safe subterranean passage suggested that the scheme might be carried out in a more accessible part, and eagerly availing themselves of the idea, they worked their way to the foundations of the fort, protected by shot-proof sheet-iron and bales of cotton, and in the course of the night constructed a mine, which they exploded before daybreak the following morning with terrific effect. The shock caused the fort to vibrate to its very base, sending an indescribable chill through every heart, and a moment after the scene became one of the wildest excitement.

Shortly before the explosion I had retired under shelter of a waggon to snatch a few moments of sleep after the night watching, leaving the look-out to a faithful native servant of my poor brother (who had fallen the preceding day), bidding him to rouse me if he noticed any movement of the enemy. I had barely stretched myself on the ground when Bhyro called me to my post at the loophole. A small smouldering fire was all that was visible through the darkness. Presently the brightness increased, and ere I had time to conjecture its purport, the thunder of the explosion stunned my senses. Rifle in hand, I hastened to the breach, half-frantic with rage and despair. The smoke and dust, coupled with the dusk of the morning, made everything look hazy, and it was some minutes before I could discern the figure of the Rev. Mr. Fisher and one or two others silently moving up the 3-pounder to cover the breach. A few words of inquiry, hastily exchanged, enabled us to ascertain that the picket had sustained no injury, and, leaving them to defend the gap, I hastened back to my post at the loophole, with Bhyro at my elbow. Nothing was discernible in the darkness below. Presently a sharp rattle of musketry from

the corner bastion announced the approach of the storming-party, and shortly after a moving mass, and occasionally the glitter of a polished sword, became dimly visible in the ditch, advancing cautiously towards the breach. Previous to the discovery, I had wasted several precious rounds of ammunition on a spade and pickaxe, which were mistaken for a crouching enemy; now my attention was directed to the advancing body creeping up silently within sixty yards of my post. Instantly the rifle was lowered, both barrels discharged, then the muskets and a double gun as rapidly as possible, each being handed to Bhyro to reload. At this crisis I was joined by Mr. David Churcher, but I merely allowed him a momentary peep at the assembled masses below, and then hurried him off to give the alarm, and to bring as many as he could from the disengaged bastion. After the lapse of a quarter of an hour he returned with two others, just as I was becoming faint and exhausted. Both shoulders were extremely sore, and I was no longer capable of bearing the pressure and recoil of the fouled muskets. In this state I resigned the post, and a few moments later had the satisfaction of seeing the enemy fall into confusion and retire, leaving heaps of their dead and dying within a few yards of the breach.

Our casualties up to this period of the siege amounted to one native and three Europeans killed and six or seven wounded. My unfortunate brother was the first European victim. He fell mortally wounded in the head by a rifle-ball, and was carried down the ramparts insensible and dying. Colonel Tucker, who filled the vacancy, shared the same fate twenty-four hours after, and both were laid in one grave at nightfall. Conductor Ahern, the only artilleryman among us, followed them two days later, and found a resting-place by their side. The number may appear insignificant, but it should be remembered that the entire garrison consisted of thirty-five men, two or three of them aged and infirm, and the loss estimated accordingly. Moreover, the efficiency of the survivors was seriously reduced by fatigue and constant exposure to a tropical sun during the hottest season of the year; besides which, our supplies of ammunition were nearly exhausted. It will not, therefore, be a matter of surprise that the last affair cast a gloom over our party. It became manifest now that we could not contend much longer against such overwhelming odds; yet not a murmur was uttered. Patient submission to the Divine will, and a fixed determination to fight to the last, was the firm resolve of every man.

At noon, when all was silence in the fierce heat of the day, except the sharp crack of the enemy's rifles which knew no cessation, a second assault was attempted and gallantly repulsed by the intrepidity and presence of mind of the Rev. Mr. Fisher, who, single-handed, met the leader of the party as he dashed up the breach, calling lustily for his men to follow him. The moment was a critical one, but our worthy chaplain was equal to the emergency, and boldly did he meet it. Rising on his feet he deliberately shot the chief through the heart, and then waited for

his followers to succeed him. But none came ; the fate of the sirdar had checked the advance, and the party precipitately retired without firing a single shot. They had, doubtless, surmised that the entire picket was on the alert, whereas, with the exception of Mr. Fisher, the men were all taking a meal beneath the shade of some trees close under the bastion.

Unsuccessful in forcing a passage through the breach, and seemingly impressed with the conviction that it would be no easy task to take the fort by storm, the rebels suffered the afternoon to pass in inaction. But the silence of the night was invaded as usual by the riflemen, and the monotony broken by occasional discharges of artillery and the hum and shouts of a multitude of voices, as if contemplating an assault. The morning dawned, and wore on without any demonstration on the part of the enemy, their marvellous forbearance increasing rather than diminishing the fever of our excitement and suspense. We naturally inferred that some deep-laid scheme was being matured, but could obtain no clue to its immediate object, and again prepared to pass another night in anxious wakefulness. Night, however, revealed what had been a mystery throughout the day. Just as Colonel Smith's relief party lay down to rest on the bare ground, the mining operations of the rebels were distinctly heard beneath the bastion, placing it beyond doubt that they intended to destroy the bastion, and with two practicable breaches failure was impossible. In the morning the working of the miners became still more audible, and the look-out reported seeing men passing and repassing with large supplies of powder, thereby confirming our conjectures, and reducing our situation to one of the utmost peril. Under these critical circumstances it was proposed to fortify the engine-house and workshops, since it was impossible, without men or means, to countermine the enemy; but the impracticability of the suggestion was too obvious to the experienced amongst us ; and the question then arose how the ladies and children were to be rescued from the impending blow. Despondency sat upon every countenance at the thought that such a consummation was hopeless ; nevertheless, the faint chance of effecting their escape to Cawnpore was grasped at, and the desperate alternative resolved on after a brief consultation. Arrangements were accordingly made to have the boats prepared to embark the ladies and children, and to slip cables at a moment's notice.

At midnight, the only three boats left out of a large fleet which was moored by the fort before the outbreak of hostilities were ready to receive their living cargo. By one, at a given signal, the men abandoned the fort, with their arms and ammunition ; and by two, the forlorn party slipped moorings, and dropped down the river. It was a solemn hour : every heart throbbed, and the prayers of the helpless ascended to the Almighty for strength and deliverance—when suddenly, to our great alarm, lest the suspicions of the sepoys should be aroused thereby, the profound silence was broken by the powerful voice of Colonel Goldie, thrice repeating, "All ready !" and adding, with redoubled em-

phasis, the command to "Let go!" in a tone so loud that it must have reached the ears of the enemy. One by one the boats moved off, Colonel Smith taking the lead, Colonel Goldie following in the next, and Major Robertson bringing up the rear. The two former were severally provided with a couple of native boatmen, the last was manned exclusively by Europeans. No sooner had the leading boat emerged out of cover of the fort than the hum of voices became distinctly audible, rising gradually to a murmur, and finally developing into a shout as the multitudes flocked to the shore, from whence they assailed us with a shower of bullets and a profusion of imprecations on the accursed Feringhees. The shot rattled fiercely against the bamboos of the roof as I lay thereon stretched at full length, facing the rebels and steering the boat, while the men worked bravely at the oars, which, assisted by the current, soon bore us on the broad bosom of the Ganges beyond musket-range. Strenuously we laboured, hoping ere morning dawn to be many miles removed from the pursuing foe; but disappointment again awaited us. The river had barely risen sufficiently high to help us over the numerous sandbanks which obstructed the passage, and our mismanagement brought us into difficulties which eventually proved our ruin. To avoid the fire of the sepoyes we abandoned the main channel and followed a branch, when progress became painfully tedious. We were, however, safe against molestation, and by dint of perseverance might have got out of harm's way, but for the treacherous conduct of Colonel Goldie's boatmen, who landed at a village and betrayed us—the villagers turning out with their matchlocks to intercept and plunder us. In our hurry to get clear, the unwieldy boat ran aground, exposing us to the fire of the rabble; and the sepoyes on the opposite shore, perceiving our predicament, brought their guns to bear on us, and despatched a ferry-boat in pursuit. To escape the imminent danger, we resolved on transferring the party to Colonel Smith's boat, which was the nearest, and abandoning Colonel Goldie's. This was happily effected as the ferry-boat approached within range, and gave us that distance the start of her. The chase was maintained for several hours, and we were progressing favourably, when an untoward accident to Colonel Smith's boat, necessitating repairs, brought us to anchor. The rabble instantly attacked us with their matchlocks, but were kept at bay by our muskets; nevertheless, one of our boatmen fell, shot through the heart while engaged on the repairs, and we hurriedly pushed off to escape a worse fate. The precious time thus lost enabled the sepoyes to gain on us; added to which, our critical position was sorely aggravated by the stranding of Major Robertson's boat on a bar over which Colonel Smith's lighter craft had passed, and was then too far advanced to allow of his men rendering us any assistance.

Thus unintentionally abandoned, we were left to our own feeble resources. All hands instantly mustered in the water, and applying their backs to the boat used every effort to float her; but the fierce current and a strong wind rendered all attempts abortive. The crisis had now

come : yelling like fiends over our misfortune, the rabble assailed us with showers of shot and arrows, and at this juncture two boats, with one individual in each squatting unconcernedly at the helm, but otherwise apparently empty, were observed dropping down the stream. Their inoffensive bearing disarmed all suspicion of any hostile intent, and we pursued our hopeless toil without giving them further notice. The surprise was complete : at twenty yards' distance the boats unmasted, and poured a volley into us, killing and wounding several, and ere we could recover our self-possession the current placed the boats alongside, sending death amongst us at every shot. Resistance was useless, but rather than yield to the savage murderers, our men, on the impulse of the moment, called on their wives and friends to follow them into the water. The summons, however, was unnecessary, for the instant the rebels set foot on board it became the signal for a general rush for the river, into which they fearlessly plunged, calling aloud on the Almighty to succour them. The scene which followed defies description. Groups, locked in each other's arms, besought God aloud, as they disappeared in the stream ; whilst others, who still clung to life, rushed hither and thither in wild despair, in the hope of eluding the fire of the murderers, till, exhausted or shot, they were swept away by the flowing tide. In their insatiable thirst for blood and plunder, the rebels pursued the fugitives breast-deep in the water, shooting and cutting down the stragglers as the current carried them by, accompanying their blows with the foulest invectives. Those who were unencumbered mingled with the assailants in hand-to-hand encounters, and died fighting desperately. For a moment I was bewildered, and knew not how to act, for death appeared in every direction. Suddenly I saw Bhyro come from the side of the boat, holding my brother's only child in his arms, and imploring the mob to spare the innocent girl and her mother, both of whom were severely wounded.

"God help them ! " I exclaimed, springing up at the same time into the boat to reach my rifle and revolver; but they were gone. Hurrying forward, I sought a musket of Fitzgerald, who with his wife and child still lingered in the boat—he unwilling to quit her side, she resolved to die where she lay. Failing in my entreaties, I seized one from the hands of an Eurasian drummer-boy, who was just emerging from beneath the boat, and dashed astern in time to see a powerful sepoy raise the thatch roof of his boat and support it on his arms. A dozen muzzles were simultaneously thrust forward within a yard of my feet, but ere a shot was fired, my musket, without being shouldered to take aim, was discharged at the monster's breast. He fell with a heavy thud, and the roof dropping over his party, left me an interval to reload. I had not time, however, to snatch a percussion-cap from the cartridge-box before half-a-dozen of the rebels broke through the matted partition, and rushing forward obliged me to retreat. Flying from one side to another in the vain hope of finding a cap, the shots meanwhile rattling through the side, my heart sickened at the sight of the unfortunate wounded and dying, and a chill came over

me at the reflection of the torture and mutilation which awaited them, and of which I too might be the victim. Quick as thought I turned to the water, where it occurred to me that if wounded death would soon terminate all my sufferings ; and plunging in, I seized a gourd which had been carefully reserved by a native for the purpose, and turned it into a buoy. Then, casting a farewell look at the groups struggling in the water, I struck out with all my might till out of range of the shots. The boat which I had left was crowded with sepoy's, who finished their butchery, and were ostentatiously displaying to the multitudes on shore the various articles of value which they had so ruthlessly plundered.

Thankful for deliverance from a merciless enemy with but a trifling flesh-wound on the shoulder, I calmly resigned myself to the will of Providence, and turned on my back to float at ease with the current. Opposite Singheerampore, where I observed Colonel Smith's boat pass through a fiery ordeal of round shot and bullets, I righted my position, when to my astonishment I caught sight of a native swimming a few feet ahead of me, with a bundle of clothes on his head, bound no doubt to the captured boat in quest of booty. Cautiously I gave him a wide berth, determined, if discovered and molested, to grapple with him. But he passed on without noticing me, and I resumed my position on the back, and continued floating down the stream.

Under Singheerampore some straggling shots from the heights attracted my attention, and turning over I was not a little alarmed to see ahead of me a ferry-boat, conveying a load of sepoy's across the river. Darkness, however, had now set in, and by the exercise of a little caution, exposing no more than my nose above water, I managed to elude observation ; and a storm, which had overtaken our boat when aground, now burst out in full force, rendering pursuit impracticable. The consequent swell, however, developed a new source of danger ; but it mattered little to me, for at the time I dared not entertain the remotest hope of finding an asylum among the natives, and my only chance lay in reaching Colonel Smith, who I was convinced, from my experience of the river, would inevitably run aground ere he had got over many miles. Resigned to my fate, I continued struggling on, greatly assisted by the gourd, until strength began to fail me, and I prepared for the final throes. It was whilst breathing a fervent prayer to Heaven that my feet touched the ground, and the discovery filled my heart with the most devout gratitude. I was saved. Greatly refreshed with the rest obtained, I was able to stem the waves more successfully, and noticed that the wind was perceptibly moderating. Half-an-hour later a dark object became visible on the broad bosom of the Ganges reflected against the horizon. "It must be the boat," I exclaimed ; and though reduced to the utmost verge of exhaustion, the welcome sight cheered my drooping spirits, and inspired me with fresh energy. Gradually the outlines became more distinct, and I struck out across the stream in order to gain the branch channel before being carried too far down the bend of the river, and thereby losing the chance of catching

the boat. It was a desperate effort, and the excitement was increased by little fish, attracted by the blood, nibbling at my wound, and by the momentary expectation that an alligator would make an end of me. I felt, indeed, that I had expended the last convulsive remains of strength, and found myself on the point of drowning. The sight of the boat still encouraged me, yet I sank two or three times, the gourd no longer affording the least buoyancy.

But it was the will of God that I should survive. Again did my feet meet the ground, otherwise I had assuredly found a watery grave. Once more on terra firma, I leisurely worked up with the current, walking along with the drift, and hailed the boat at a distance of three hundred yards to assure myself that there was no mistake. No reply came. Convinced, however, of the identity of the craft, I advanced and hailed again. "Come on!" answered Major Munro, in a subdued tone. The muffled accents sounded ominously, and I augured that they had suffered severely from the grape and musketry off Singheerampore. Silently I drew toward the boat.

"How did matters fare with you?" whispered two or three voices, as I stood, perfectly helpless, unable even to lift my arms above my shoulders.

"All, I am afraid, killed," I replied: such being my conviction at the time, as I had not seen a single soul attempt to escape.

"For God's sake mention not a word of it to the ladies! our own disasters have been sad enough," remarked the major; and extending his arms to my assistance he drew me on board.

* The gourd which had so materially contributed to save my life was carefully laid aside to be preserved as a souvenir, should Providence carry me through those troublous times, and I then retired to the top of the roof under a drizzling rain. Lighting on a deserted mattress, wet through by the rain, I wrapped myself in its folds, using part as a bed and the remainder for a covering, and endeavoured to snatch a few hours' sleep; but just as I had lain down, young James, assistant opium-agent, who had been trying in vain to repair the broken tiller of the helm, came and begged me, as I was the only one on board able to use the tools, to put the mortice in. Aware of my weakly state, the good thoughtful fellow abstracted a bottle of porter reserved for the ladies and brought it to me. The powerful stimulant was quite reviving, nevertheless I was utterly incapable of handling the adze, and after one or two abortive attempts was obliged to return to my mattress. Overpowering fatigue, combined with the influence of the porter, soon threw me into a happy state of oblivion, till aroused by the heavy splash of Mr. Rohan's corpse, which was consigned to the deep from my side. It was not quite dawn, and objects were but dimly visible on the nearest shore, which on close observation seemed to be receding. The boat had floated with the rising tide, and we were drifting down, unguided, at the rate of four miles an hour, we knew not whither. At daybreak we set to and repaired the disabled helm, rigged up a sail out of two blankets lashed to a bamboo, and sailed

onward more comfortably. Shortly before setting sail, a voice was heard in the distance, which, on being repeated, we recognized as that of the Rev. Mr. Fisher, and subsequently he was seen emerging from the long grass which had concealed him from sight. His condition was truly heart-rending, and it was a marvel how he had survived to reach us, with a severe wound in his right leg, having had to swim no inconsiderable distance, and to walk several miles in pursuit of the boat. Stepping on board, he burst into tears, and in an agony of grief exclaimed aloud: "My poor wife and child, both drowned in my arms!" And burying his face in his hands, he sobbed long and pitifully.

With heavy hearts we proceeded on our voyage. The day was beautiful, and all nature smiled serenely, contrasting strangely with our wretchedness and misery. The villagers, too, seemed to repose in profound peace, as if ignorant of the revolution which convulsed the empire. The change was grateful beyond description: it was the first we had seen of it after the frightful ordeal of the past fortnight.

In the afternoon the lofty banks of Khoosoomkhore stood out in bold outline against a cloudless sky, a village bitterly hostile to us, which on our first voyage had manifested a determination to oppose our passage, leading us to infer that we should not be permitted to escape with impunity now. Therefore, leaving the main channel, we steered for a branch, and swept along gallantly under a fresh breeze. At about 3 P.M. we stood nearly abreast of the detestable place, and a little later our attention was arrested by a body of armed men assembled on the left bank, apparently awaiting our approach. To avoid them as much*as possible, we swerved from the deep channel and hugged the opposite shore. The result was that we got ourselves inextricably aground, and might have been captured and destroyed by the Khoosoomkhore men—who forthwith crossed over to the island and demanded our instant surrender—but for the happy fact that the body before mentioned proved to be friends, who hastened to our assistance, and got us safely moored by their village before the Khoosoomkhore people could inflict any damage. Immediately we landed, the villagers busied themselves in the most hospitable offices, providing the ladies and children with milk and cooked food in abundance, and presenting us with young yams, dispelling all fears as to the honesty of their purpose. Colonel Smith immediately called an assembly of the chief and his principal men to consult on the best means of action, and to secure a crew and guard to accompany us. The preliminaries having been arranged, it was decided that the boat should remain moored where she lay under the protection of Balgobind and his villagers, and that the voyage should be resumed at daybreak on the following morning. The announcement, as may well be supposed, was most gratifying to all parties, and we then proceeded to alleviate the sufferings of the wounded, who had been cooped up in a boat barely fit to accommodate twenty at a pinch, but which was crowded by upwards of seventy-five souls. Hungry, tired, and smarting from exposure to the blazing

sun for a whole day at the helm, with a wound festering and sore, I vainly sought every available corner to alleviate my own unendurable sufferings. An application of sweet-oil to the scorched back gave no relief, and failed to allay the rising blisters which completely covered my neck and shoulders. At length I bethought myself of taking a look into the village, where I might not only obtain a meal, but possibly a *charpoi** also, whereto rest for the night. Stepping ashore, I beckoned to Lieutenant Swettenham (10th N. I.), who was also wounded, to accompany me, but the poor fellow pleaded inability; so proceeding alone, I asked the first man I met, if he would conduct me to his village, and procure me some food.

"*Hanh, chullo*" ("Yes, come on"), was the ready reply; and with him leading the way, almost in utter darkness, over narrow footpaths overgrown with grass, and through corn-fields, we arrived, after ten minutes' walk, at a humble hut. Seating me at the foot of a tree, my hospitable host proceeded to make me welcome, and produced a *thallee*, or brass dish, of *dahl* and *chupatties* (lentil soup and hand-bread), which he set before me. It was a bold step on the part of a Rajpoot thus to disregard the prejudices of his high caste by offering food to a Christian in the same vessel which he used himself. I showed my reluctance to take advantage of his kindness by refusing to use the dish, which would have rendered it unclean to him until subjected to a course of purification, desiring him to transfer the meal to a platter of leaves, and stating my reasons for suggesting the change. The man was evidently pleased, and smiling at my consideration, observed, "The sahibs, too, understand our prejudices," a remark which was received with applause by the numerous bystanders. It was a great point gained, and I determined to make the most of my fortuitous success; so, after satisfying the cravings of hunger, I asked for a *charpoi*. One was shortly produced and gratefully accepted. It was an old rickety affair, in tatters, and otherwise uninviting in the extreme. No relief was to be found on such a couch: it was too short by a foot and a half, and the loose netting, hanging like a bag under the superincumbent weight, cut deep into the bare body. Nevertheless, it was preferable to the damp ground overrun with vermin and scorpions. "Oh, for a little straw!" I sighed; but such a luxury was beyond the resources of the village. At length I was provided with some coarse grass taken from the thatch of an old hut, which, though by no means suited to the purpose, served greatly to improve my couch; and after suffering considerable annoyance from the swarms of mosquitos which infested the place, and no little pain from my tender back, I fell into a deep sleep from sheer exhaustion. At midnight a heavy hand was laid on my shoulder, and the jingle of steel ramrods roused me to consciousness. Starting up considerably alarmed at the warlike sound, I inquired what was the matter. "The colonel-sahib has sent for you on board," was

* A rude bedstead on four legs, generally constructed of bamboos, with coarse grass for cordage.

the man's reply. I arose at once to follow him, the thought occurring to me that the colonel wished to clear the coast before the hostile natives were up ; but I found myself stiff and sore, and barely capable of moving. Moreover, I felt callous, and at the time did not seem to care two straws what became of me. In that mood, throwing myself back on the *charpoi*, I bade the messenger to inform Colonel Smith that I was unable to join him. After a short absence, the man returned with the same orders ; but I was too weak and indifferent to heed them, and dismissed him with the same message. The good old colonel, however, appears to have discredited the statement, and, fearing that I was treacherously detained, despatched a third messenger, this time with a note. Happily for me, the man got mixed up in an affray on his way to the village, and lost the letter, so that the boat cast off without me. It subsequently transpired that the presence of the boat had attracted the villagers from the neighbourhood, who assumed a hostile bearing, and showed a strong disposition to plunder. Observing this, the colonel determined to quit the place, but the sight of a large sum of money paid to Balgobind's people for a crew and guard brought matters to a crisis. The intruders instantly fell on the small band, wrested a large share of the amount, and proceeded to attack the boat ; but the lashing was severed in time to prevent the outrage, which would undoubtedly have terminated in bloodshed.

Next morning the profound quiet of the village and the absence of the friendly faces which were wont to greet me, together with my own personal helplessness, contributed to make me feel the utter desolation of my condition. I was among strangers and men whose insatiable love of money and thirst for blood had extinguished every nobler sentiment of humanity. Moreover, any reckless vagabond, wishing to gain the favour of the Nawab, and reap a handsome reward, might with impunity strike off my head, and convey it to that chief. Thoughts like these sadly depressed me, and I reproached the folly which, in a weak moment, had led me to throw away the only chance of life. It was a strange infatuation ! And the thought of never again beholding the face of a relative or friend quite unmanned me. No longer able to restrain my feelings, I retired to the darkest corner of the hovel, and sought relief in a flood of tears, and consolation in fervent heartfelt prayer. At this juncture my host unexpectedly entered, and, noticing my plight, took me by the hand, saying : "Weep not ; no man dare touch a hair of your head while Balgobind has a drop of blood in his body." Ashamed to have been discovered in such a mood by one who could hardly appreciate my feelings or the cause of my grief, I hastily removed all outward tokens of sadness, and joined him in friendly conversation, glad indeed, under the circumstances, to find any sympathy in a native.

Day after day passed in monotonous gloom. I was completely shut out from the world beyond the precincts of the village, and in utter ignorance of the fate of near relatives and friends scattered over the wide

extent of India. Having nothing but such desponding reflections to occupy my mind, time hung heavily and rendered existence doubly intolerable. After a while a rumour prevailed in the village that the colonel's boat had reached Cawnpore, but subsequent reports contradicted it. As I afterwards learned, the first was the correct version, for the boat did reach Bithoor, where it fell into the hands of the Nana, who caused all the men to be murdered, with the exceptions of Colonels Smith and Goldie and Mr. Thornhill. The captives were conveyed to Cawnpore, where every soul perished in the barbarous massacre which was committed on General Havelock's advance towards that city. Rumours were also current of the escape of two Europeans from Major Robertson's boat, who, like myself, had found shelter in the neighbourhood of the village where it was captured. Subsequent communication with them proved them to be Major Robertson himself and Mr. David Churcher. The former had been desperately wounded, and succumbed, after enduring intense agony for nearly two months; the latter escaped to the British camp, on the re-occupation of Futtéghur by Sir Colin Campbell, in January, 1858.

The filthy quarters allotted me in an old bullock-shed, tenanted by cattle, where mosquitos and sand-flies swarmed in spite of the suffocating smoke which was nightly kindled to expel them, worrying both man and beast, so exhausted all endurance that I seriously contemplated effecting my escape to Cawnpore. This alternative suggested itself owing to my having hitherto failed in joining Messrs. Probyn and Edwards, who were within fifteen miles of me, Hurdeobuksh deeming it hazardous to have too many of us together, on account of the threats of the Nawab of Furrukabad, who had offered a large reward for our heads. After considerable difficulty, I succeeded in finding a boatman in a neighbouring village, who was willing to risk the enterprise, on promise of a handsome recompence. We proposed taking a canoe, which would have conveyed us to Cawnpore in a night; but the means of procuring one were wanting, and the wary boatman was not disposed to advance the few rupees necessary for its loan or purchase. The times, too, were unpropitious, for the most harrowing accounts of murders and massacres of Europeans, and of their total extermination, reached the village from all directions. Consequently, I was obliged to chew the cud of patience and abide the progress of events, which, sooner or later, must reach their culminating point, when a favourable change might be hopefully anticipated. The interim I whiled away with the natives, who became extremely familiar in their intercourse with the lonely stranger.

At this period the following singular incident tended greatly to mitigate my solitude and depression of spirits. Balgobind had throughout maintained that the arms of the British would ultimately triumph, and as our intimacy grew closer, I one day had the curiosity to ask him his reason for entertaining so favourable a view of our situation. The simple but sagacious Brahmin, looking me full in the face and nodding his head significantly, replied: "Listen: our countrymen have neither

wisdom nor leaders competent to turn their advantages to account. Moreover," he added, "they are destitute of justice and truth, and have imbrued their hands in the blood of innocent women and children. Ram will never prosper their cause." A few days later I was surprised to see him walking up to my hut at an unusually early hour, his countenance beaming with pleasurable excitement. "*Khoosh ho*," he exclaimed; "*Ab dyeh*." ("Rejoice, they are come,")—alluding to the Europeans, who under the immortal Havelock had driven out the hordes under the Nana and recaptured Cawnpore. The little band of heroes who had accomplished this daring feat was magnified into an army of ten thousand fierce bearded veterans, who shot the rebels with their extraordinary weapons beyond a mile distant (referring to the Enfield rifles), the bullets of which were said to kill before the discharge was heard. The irresistible charges of the cavalry, too, were coloured with the embellishments of the imaginative native mind, ever prone to exaggeration. Shortly after, the intelligence of the successful re-occupation of Cawnpore was confirmed, producing a marvellous change in the disaffected. The villagers who before had hardly deigned to notice me now lavished their spontaneous attentions on me, and Hurdeobuksh despatched a messenger to inquire after my welfare, the man returning a few days later to conduct me to Khussoura, where Messrs. Probyn and Edwards were. But the strictest secrecy was necessary in order to execute the design. Several hostile villages lay in the way, and many of the inhabitants of the adjacent village, who were implicated in the attempt to plunder Colonel Smith's boat, were anxious to get rid of me, and thereby destroy all evidence of their guilt. The arrangements for the journey were speedily completed, but I was resolved that Balgobind, to whom I owed my safety, and who was thoroughly trustworthy, should be apprised of the intended departure, and if necessary assist in furthering our plans. It was, therefore, left to him, as soon as my absence was discovered, to express as much surprise as the rest of the villagers, and to lead the men on a wrong scent, should they show a disposition to follow me. In consideration of his services, I assured him of an adequate reward on the restoration of order. I may here mention that Balgobind faithfully executed his part in the scheme, and successfully misled the villagers, and on the re-establishment of our authority I had the gratification of fulfilling my promise by obtaining for him a suitable recognition from the British Government.

The guide having appointed a rendezvous under a solitary bush, in the centre of an extensive corn-field, took his leave, and bade us join him after 10 P.M., when the villagers had retired to rest. At the concerted time I stealthily let myself over a low wall which screened me from observation, and following the directions received, made my way to the spot indicated through fields and jungle of long grass. There I found the man waiting patiently, holding a pony for my accommodation. We now hurried on as fast as the inundated state of the country and the pace of my steed would admit, avoiding by circuitous roads every village in

the way. The barking of hungry curs at our heels caused us no little trepidation, lest their noise might alarm the villagers; but luckily such howlings are not unusual with village dogs, and we passed on in the moonlight, the brilliancy of which had been another source of anxiety to us. An hour's ride, with my legs hanging unsupported by stirrups, tired me excessively, and, unable any longer to endure the uncomfortable seat, I took to my bare feet, which the necessity of the times had inured to such roughness, and found great relief in walking. About midnight the guide abandoned the pony, which had proved only an encumbrance, proceeding through flooded nullahs, where we had to pick our way with the aid of long bamboo staves, which also served us for clubs of defence, and, after two hours' brisk marching, arrived at an island in the midst of a wide tract of submerged country, where droves of cattle were herded for pasture. My guide, expecting that we should be challenged by the herdsmen, bade me observe strict silence while he made the replies, as it was impossible to avoid these unscrupulous characters, who, generally speaking, are led by their wild mode of life to resort to the profession of dacoits and highwaymen. Taking the footpath skirting the island, along the ridge of the swollen Ramgunga, flowing with a rapidity and roar which made itself heard a mile on either side of the river, we continued our progress, assuming as much unconcern as possible in order to elude detection—myself well enveloped in a blanket, with nothing but my eyes exposed. Two or three men now stepped forward and stood with chins reclining on their hands, doubled one upon another, over the end of their long formidable iron-bound clubs.

"Who are you?" asked one as he approached us.

"Hurdeobuksh's sepah," answered the guide.

"And who is this with you?" inquired another, as he deliberately walked up to scrutinize my countenance, removing the covering, as if unsatisfied with the response.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed out the impudent fellow, half in jest and half in sarcasm, as he discovered a white face.

"Is this the individual who was with Balgobind at Terah?" rejoined he, addressing the guide.

"The same," I replied, finding it useless to maintain the disguise any longer. My promptness evidently pleased them and won their good-will, for the man immediately added: "Jah, butch gai" ("Go, you have escaped"), and good-naturedly tapping me on the shoulder, with sundry jocose remarks, bade us adieu.

Glad to have got clear of such suspicious friends so easily, we proceeded onward, and reached Hurdeobuksh's *ghurree* a little after three in the morning—the place which I had quitted two months previously with rather different feelings. It was now perfectly isolated, quite inaccessible to artillery, and consequently impregnable. Cautiously did the guide lead me through the winding footpaths to the entrance. There he left me, and entered into conversation in whispers with the watch, then conducted me

to the fort, and concealed me under the eaves of a hut while he started off to report my arrival. These precautions were deemed necessary, as many of Hurdeobuksh's retainers were untrustworthy, and he was therefore anxious to keep my presence a secret to them as far as possible. In the course of ten minutes the guide returned, accompanied by a second person, who had orders to proceed with me at once to Khussoura. Following my new guide, who communicated with me in whispers and by signs, we took a footpath, just discernible through the long grass which the late rains had thrown up, along the ridge of an embankment, which served to keep out the flood, and also as an outwork of defence, and reached the Ramgunga after narrowly escaping the fangs of a huge snake which we had disturbed on the way.

Whilst waiting for the ferry, I lay down in a boat moored by the shore, and dropped off into a sound sleep from the fatigue of the journey, and finally reached Khussoura a little after sunrise, having swam the last nullah before entering the village.

For the rest of the narrative I beg to refer the reader to Mr. Edwards's journal of his "Personal Adventures during the Indian Mutiny," wherein will be found some interesting details of our meeting, and subsequent escape to Havelock's camp at Cawnpore a month after I joined him and Mr. Probyn.

In conclusion, I may add that Bhyro, the faithful servant who behaved so nobly in striving to save my brother's wife and child, fell a captive with them. He was carried back to Futehghur with them and two or three other ladies and children, and delivered up to the Nawab, who cast them into prison. There, after suffering the severest trials and privations, while their wounds were yet fresh, they were led out by the sepoys, in company with about thirty native Christians, and shot down like felons. Bhyro contrived to make his escape under cover of the night, when being ferried across the Ganges. Hearing of my safety, the worthy man determined to find me out, and had planned my escape to Agra in disguise, collecting a small sum from his fellow-servants to provide the necessary outfit. Unhappily, the poor man was seized with a fatal disease on the morning of his departure, and succumbed to it in a few hours. The sad tidings of his death reached me shortly before our departure for Cawnpore, and caused me great sorrow. He had served my lamented brother upwards of twenty years, and had nursed me as a child in his arms. His devotion had lately been put to the severest test, and had proved unwaveringly faithful.

GAVIN S. JONES.

Politics in the Sandwich Islands.

THE history—so brief and so picturesque—of the little septinsular kingdom in the North Pacific has become latterly pretty well known, both here and on the Continent. Its king has his place among “Men of the Time,” and the Gotha Almanack gives statistics of his Hawaiian dynasty and national resources. The importance of the geographical position of the islands is claiming increased attention with the Governments of this continent and of America, and the expected visit of the young and widowed Queen Emma to England next spring will no doubt draw forth our sympathies, as well as our curiosity. During the past year, treaties of friendship and commerce have been negotiated between several continental Governments and Hawaii, and others are in progress.

In November, 1863, the fourth king bearing the name of Kaméhaméha died prematurely, after an enlightened reign of nine years, yet before quite attaining the age of thirty. He was succeeded on the throne by a brother, two years his senior, who assumed, on his accession, the family name of Kaméhaméha V.* With his brother, this prince had, in 1850, visited England, France, and Belgium. They spoke and wrote our language fluently; read our history; studied our laws; mingled in our society; and saw events through European spectacles. What impressions of politics, etiquette, and religion, they thus acquired were ineffaceable in their minds, and thereafter influenced all their conduct.

By the articles of the constitution given to the people in 1852 by Kaméhaméha III., it was incumbent on the successor to the vacant throne to take an oath that he would maintain the constitution of the kingdom whole and inviolate, and would govern in conformity therewith. Kaméhaméha V. abstained from taking this oath. There were features in the existing constitution which were, to his mind, objectionable, and he resolved to seize the opportunity for making reforms, and bringing the kingdom into further accordance with the most enlightened European monarchies. During his brother's reign the present ruler of Hawaii had occupied the post of minister of interior. He had shown great aptitude for business, and had had leisure and means for observing the working of a system which contained the elements of democracy and puritanism. It will be necessary to describe, in a few words, the growth of this political system.

Up to the year 1839 the Hawaiian Islands were governed by an absolute monarch, and upon strictly feudal principles. In that year the

* In the vocal language of Polynesia this name has the soft pronunciation of Ka-mai-a-mai-a.

efforts of the American missionaries and ex-missionaries, who had given much useful assistance in governing the country, worked so far on the patriotic and bon-vivant king, Kaméhaméha III., as to induce him to sign a Bill of Rights, and, the following year, to grant a constitution, by which absolute rule was yielded up, and irresponsible power exchanged for government by the three estates of king, nobles, and people.

The king had never been out of his own small dominions. He had to be guided by the teaching and advice of the active-minded men who had already volunteered to assist in holding the reins of government, and who showed that they would not be averse to take the ribbons entirely into their own hands upon occasion. But at that time the king's advisers did not prompt to greater change than the conversion of absolutism into limited monarchy.

The scheme of government thus produced was naturally a hybrid one. Its promoters were Americans; they were missionaries, or persons who, having been missionaries, had left that calling for official or officious life. The constitution was a mosaic, to which the Pentateuch, the British Government, and the American Declaration of Independence each contributed a part. Yet, in spite of manifold defects, it was a revolution in the right direction. It lasted twelve years; and under it the nation advanced in civilization and prosperity.

The administration consisted of four departments; there was a minister of interior affairs, who was also premier; a minister of foreign relations, of finance, of public instruction; and an attorney-general. In 1845 the government was joined and strengthened by Mr. Wyllie, a Scotch gentleman, who had been well known in London, and was a friend of General Miller, the English commissioner in the Sandwich Islands. Statute laws were passed, and a little tinkering of the constitution began.

It seemed the fate of all political opinion, when acclimated in Hawaii, to "suffer a sea change." We have seen a tyrant taking up limited monarchy, democrats from the United States constituting a kingdom; and now we are to see an early and ardent member of the Reform Club converted into a staunch Conservative, and an American attorney-general writing himself in one of his letters "a rank Tory."

With the infusion of fresh blood, it came to pass that, in 1850, the king recommended a new constitution, and appointed a commission of three persons to frame a new model. It was perfected, and, in 1852, was signed by the king, who died in something less than two years afterwards. This constitution was an advance on the former one; but a good deal of the Levitical element and some revolutionary rags remained in it. Dr. Judd was one of the three commissioners, his coadjutors being the chief, Joane Li, and the Chief Justice Lee. The two former of this triad will make their reappearance hereafter.

It happened that while much discussion was going on in Honolulu about the proposed new constitution, the Hawaiian consulate in China was represented by the senior member of the commercial house of Jardine

and Company. At the same time, Sir John Bowring was governor of Hong Kong ; and a correspondence was brought about between the latter and Mr. Wyllie on the same subject, and a draft of the constitution was sent to Sir John for his opinion. The editor of Jeremy Bentham objected to the opening sentence, in which it is asserted that all men are created free and equal. Bentham had himself been the correspondent of several of the American Presidents ; and in his "Critical Examination of the Declaration of Rights," exposed the pretension that "all men are born free and equal." "No man ever was, is, or will be, born free ; all are born helpless children, in a state of absolute subjection to parents, and, in many countries as slaves, in vassalage to owners ; and as to equality, the statement is absurd, the condition of no two men, to say nothing of *all*, being equal, in the many gradations which exist, of wealth and poverty, servants and masters, influence and position." Sir John, who had been Bentham's most intimate friend and executor, quoted the views of his master, which also appeared to his own mind incontestable. In spite, however, of any efforts which Mr. Wyllie could make, supported by the China correspondence, the constitution commenced with the old assertion, "God hath created all men free and equal." Article 12 pronounced that "No person who imports a slave, or slaves, into the king's dominions, shall ever enjoy any civil or political rights in this realm." Article 19 prescribed, "All elections of the people shall be by ballot ;" and Article 78 established manhood-suffrage. Moreover, the king's power was checked and controlled by the strange institution of the *Kuhina-Nui*—an invention which, if borrowed from any other nation, must have come from Japan. This "regulator" to the government machine, who stood above ministers, and, as it were, on the uppermost step of the throne, might be a man or a woman—indeed, was generally the latter. As she was to be the king's special counsellor, and was to have powers almost equal to the king's, with whom she would necessarily require to have long closetings on State affairs, she must have been a discouragement to a queen of jealous temperament, and not a little detrimental to the progress of business, since the constitution provides that "the king and the kuhina-nui shall have a negative on each other's public acts." Among his, or her, miscellaneous offices, the kuhina-nui had charge of the great seal of the kingdom, the royal standard, and the national flag. Also, in case of the king's death or minority, this solid shadow had to perform all duties, and exercise all powers ordinarily vested in the king. Such were some of the features of the constitution which existed till August, 1864.

Kamehameha V. came to the throne, as we have related, in November, 1863, and commenced the exercise of his functions, but without taking the oath prescribed by, and in favour of, his then constitution. Mr. Wyllie was made minister of foreign affairs ; an Englishman with whom he had been long intimate, and whose devotion to the Hawaiian nation was undoubted, received the portfolio of interior ;

a French gentleman, formerly vice-consul for France, had charge of the finances ; and his attorney-general was an American, who, like others of his nation on the bench or at the bar, was loyal, clear-sighted, and had definite views of government. It was not a bad team for the first stage out of town, and the start was promising.

The king had determined not to take the oath. From after occurrences, it is to be inferred that there were differences of opinion in the cabinet on this subject. The attorney-general, and the minister of foreign relations, however, appear to have been consistent in their support of the king's view, and a convention was resolved on to amend the constitution.

The word convention has to English ears an uncanny ring. It reminds them of Paris in 1792, and of England in 1848. Four of the five points in the charter then clamoured for here, already existed in the Hawaiian constitution ; viz. the ballot, universal suffrage, non-property qualification, and paid representatives. Annual parliaments were excluded because it was more convenient to members to assemble biennially. Now Kaméhaméha V. wished to get rid, by means of a national vote, of universal suffrage, and to replace it by a qualification based on income and property, united to a certain advance in mental acquirements and moral fitness.

The reason why a convention was necessary to the king's purpose was this—that though the constitution contained power for the legislature to amend it, the consent of two biennial parliaments was necessary to effect any reform. Such a delay was a strain on the king's patience, and he remembered that he had not yet taken what may be called the coronation oath. But the decisions of a specially convened body might be followed immediately by a session of parliament, and thus the reconstruction of the State might be completed within three or four months. This was the motive which decided the king's actions. A convention was accordingly summoned by proclamation—political feeling instantly responding throughout the islands. The prime objects of the king and his advisers were known, or felt to be, to destroy the radical element in the constitution, to base electoral *privilege* on a property qualification, and to give a larger place in the State to the king, allowing him to govern as well as reign. The native, long accustomed to the feudal yoke, felt no aversion to this design ; but it alarmed the minds of many settled foreigners—the American missionaries (but not all) being especially aroused at the prospect of absolutism and aristocracy, Puseyism and Popery. They raised an outcry in their districts, and led the people to think it their duty to send, not representatives, but delegates to the convention.

The king in the meantime was not idle. He made a progress through his dominions, attended by his faithful foreign-office minister. They delivered speeches—some judicious, some inopportune—and on the 7th of July, 1864, the convention was opened by the king, who, before proceeding to the court-house, attended service at the Episcopal church.

The business of the session began the following day, the three estates

sitting in the same chamber. The composition of the convention was as follows:—First, the king—president. Second, nobles, sixteen in number, headed by the kuhina-nui: of the remaining fifteen nobles eleven were natives, two Britons, and two Americans. Third, delegates, twenty-seven in number; the white skins and native blood being about equally divided. Judge Robertson was appointed vice-president; and M. Varigny and the attorney-general, though neither nobles nor representatives, attended, like the French Minister without portfolio, to assist in the debates. The House appointed Mr. Judd to be secretary; Mr. Judd named a native chaplain, and Anglo-Saxons for interpreter, reporter, and serjeant-at-arms.

Of the nobles, as might be expected, the very large majority seconded the king's views. One of this estate, however, possessed of the short but emphatic name of Ii, who had been one of the three commissioners engaged to construct the constitution of 1852, was less tractable and more democratic than his peers. He was also more talkative; and both from the frequency of his being on his legs, and from the two conspicuous vowels which composed his name, he quite fulfilled the vulgar definition of *egotism*, viz. letting the private *I* be too much in the public *eye*.

The king, in his opening address, pronounced with great facility in English and in his native tongue, briefly informed the convention of the objects for which he had summoned them; and in all subsequent speeches he used the bi-lingual method. The reports published under the name of *The Convention* are printed in parallel columns of the two languages.

"History repeats itself." The very question which so long agitated the assembled States-General in 1789, whether the three orders should sit in one or in separate chambers, excited in Honolulu long and obstinate discussion. It was nearly a week before the question was settled. The conclusion arrived at was that the three estates should sit and debate in one chamber. After which the rules were debated and carried; that relating to voting being that there should be united voting on the rules or by-laws, but constitutional subjects should be introduced by the representatives and put to the vote among themselves. If a resolution failed there in consequence of a minority, its quietus was made. If it passed the lower house, the votes of the nobles were taken on it; and after a majority of that estate, it was submitted to the king for his approval or veto.

Comparing these proceedings with those of the States-General in Paris, we see that whereas the *Tiers Etat* demanded that their "brothers the nobles" should sit and vote in one, and that the People's Chamber, the wish of the Hawaiian representatives was rather to vote apart. Five weeks were required for the popular victory at the Luxembourg; nearly a week was occupied in Honolulu.

The rules established for discussion were good, and there was considerable ability shown in the management of the debates. The weakest part of the proceedings of this convention was, that when a question had been apparently definitively settled and a resolution passed one day, it was occasionally re-opened the next, under the form of a new resolution.

The business of the convention advanced rather slowly. Determined opposition to the king's design soon showed itself among the representatives ; and a junto of some five or six members of the extreme left made a stand-up fight. One of the nobles, a cabinet minister also, whose views were opposed to the meeting of the Assembly, absented himself on the plea of illness, and retired to his own estate, nor returned till near the close, and that under pressing solicitation. The determined knot of root-and-branch men just mentioned consisted chiefly of Dr. Judd, ex-missionary, ex-minister, and ex-United-States-man ; his son, the secretary ; a rural missionary ; a native lawyer ; and a Scandinavian resident, named Knudsen. Among the constitutional weapons which the Opposition armed themselves with, sarcasm was not wanting ; and a subject for their irony was easily discovered. It happened that in some outlying district the ballot-papers of the electors were collected in a *bucket* ; and so greatly was this joke or this grievance worked, and so often was the pail returned to, that the convention was in considerable danger of being wrecked on that very small rock.

After three weeks of discussion, pauses, wrangling and voting, the king himself withdrew for a time, from the real or assumed cause of indisposition. His Majesty's place was supplied in the interim by Judge Robertson and M. Varigny. At last, came the great questions of universal suffrage, and property qualifications in voters and representatives. The abolition of the kuhina-nui had been easily managed. There was hard hitting about the suffrage. Yet the American party blundered when M. Knudsen drew a lamentable picture of the English people—poor, oppressed, starved, ignorant, and irreligious, all owing to the want of manhood-suffrage. His statements were derived from "Mr. Joseph Kay, appointed by the University of Oxford to investigate the condition of the lower classes." The reply came swiftly and hard from a chief, the Hon. D. Kalakana, a native who had never left the confines of home. He said, "Mr. Knudsen had been very ready to give them instances of English poverty, which that gentleman considered arose from the fact of the people not having universal suffrage ; but he forgot to say anything of the state of things in America, where universal suffrage did exist, and which was one cause of the present war. The statement of Mr. Knudsen referred to the social condition of England in 1851, but, had he been there in 1861, he would have found a very different state of things existing ; for, within those years, great improvements have been made with regard to the poor-law and condition of the lower classes, though, no doubt, a portion of the manufacturing districts of England were now suffering in consequence of the American war. Mr. Knudsen also stated that purity of election existed in the United States where the ballot system prevailed ; but, according to reports of American papers, it seems as if there was not much purity of election existing from the ballot ; but the reverse. This had been confirmed to him by a naturalized American gentleman, who was well known in California, who had told him (Mr. Kalakana) that 'if you

wanted a man's vote in New York, just show him a revolver or a bowie-knife.' In California, the result of universal suffrage was the establishment of a vigilance committee to preserve law and order."

It is curious to see political events and persons transmitted through different media, or reflected back from a distance. Mr. Gladstone would probably find some amusement in seeing his views of the extension of the suffrage reviewed in the legislative assembly of the Sandwich Islands—which was done.

In the long and serious discussions on property and income qualification, dollars were pitted against education, and the natural right of all men to drop papers into ballot-boxes was sustained against both with the vigour of despair. It was Carlyle's "Gigability" against the voting instinct of the natural man. Mr. Hitchcock led the van. "Neither dollars nor want of dollars, was the criterion of respectability." Mr. Green, a missionary, followed on the same side, and presented the sad picture of a notorious thief being elected as a representative, and elections being decided by the constable of the district. These were the certain consequences of a legislation of voters. He held the right of universal suffrage as one of the greatest and dearest rights of a free people.

M. Varigny, on the part of the king, inquired whether it were right to give a candle to a blind man to carry in a powder-magazine, or a vote to a man who could neither read nor write. Would representatives place an open razor in the hands of a baby, or the franchise in the hands of those totally incompetent to use it properly, or unable to read the name written or printed on a ballot?

On the 9th of August, the king was able to return to his place at the convention, and he listened to the debate on this main question with considerable patience. Intermixed with some other subjects—as for instance, the kingly dignity, the king *quād* king, opposed to "chief magistrate"—the qualification discussion continued till the abrupt termination of the convention four days later; producing some excellent debate, and showing that the spirit of statesmanship was not wanting in his assembly. The most remarkable of the speeches were those delivered by two native representatives named Kahaleahu and Kaawahi. These addresses exhibit the powers and characteristics of the Polynesian mind in a very favourable light.

"May it please your Majesty, the nobles, and the delegates," commenced Kahaleahu, "a great deal has been said on both sides during this discussion, and much ability displayed both on the part of the ministry and that of the opponents among the delegates. The question for the convention to decide is, as to the expediency of allowing the very poor among the people the privilege of voting for representatives. . . . It is objected to this provision, that it is taking away the right of the people. The *right* of the people, without regard to property qualification, is protection for each in his person and the products of his industry. These are amply provided for under the laws, and therefore it is erroneous to say that any right of the people is taken away by the 62nd article."

Mr. Kaawahi said, speaking of the disputed 62nd article, "If I believed that it really was taking away a right from the people, I would very quickly support the motion to reject this article. . . . What were the motives of his Majesty in placing this article before us? Did he thereby intend to take away one of the rights of the people? I do not think so. His Majesty is of the same race with his people; he is their sire; and whatever he sees is for their good, that he proposes, and whatever is detrimental to them that he withholds. Believing thus, I decidedly object to the offensive language used before his Majesty about his taking away the people's rights. Neither the king nor his ministers have ever done, or attempted to do, anything of the sort. . . . I would ask the delegates to remember the words of the delegate for Makawoa yesterday, when he said the people of his district could take care of themselves, without any assistance from the ministry. Who and what are the ministry? Are they not the hands by which the king carries on the government? Are they not the servants of the people—of those of Makawoa as well as other places? The delegate for Kaanapali says there are a great many impoverished people in his district. I am well aware of it, and also that they are a hard-working people, and able to earn a great deal more than the amount proposed in this article, and that there is plenty of employment to be had in the district. The delegate from Kaanapali says they have bought land from the Hon. Mr. Bishop. Well, there is plenty of firewood on that land, and the Lahaina sugar-mill wants it, but they don't bring sufficient. Then they have large plains on which to raise stock. Altogether, I cannot admit that they have any right to be impoverished; and if they are it is certainly their own fault. Let them not object to a law which is for the benefit of the whole country from one end to the other. It is not a reasonable argument to put forward about the poverty of the people, preventing them from obtaining the privilege of voting, when we consider our position. Here we are pleasantly situated as to climate; we can plough and plant and reap at any and all seasons of the year, without any winter or dry season to interfere with our labours. Employment is to be had in abundance, throughout the land, on the various sugar plantations, and labour is in demand. There is no lack of a market for our produce, for we are on the highway of commerce. The seas are open and free to the fisherman, the forests are waiting for the woodman's axe, and there are a hundred different branches of industry in every direction, open and waiting for the hands to improve them. Why, then, is this cry of *poverty* raised as an argument for striking out the property qualification, and permitting the idle to indulge in their dreams? If the people are made to understand and appreciate the great privilege of the ballot, it will be an incentive to industry, in order to choose whomsoever they may desire to represent them in the legislature." But his Majesty's Opposition was not to be moved.

On the 13th of August, the king's patience had broken down. "This is the fifth day of the discussion of this article," said his Majesty. "I am very sorry that we do not agree on this important point. It is clear to me that if universal suffrage is permitted, this government will soon lose its monarchical character. Thank you, delegates and nobles, for the readiness with which you have come to this convention, in accordance with my proclamation. As we do not agree, it is useless to prolong the session. And as at the time his Majesty Kaméhaméha III. gave the constitution of the year 1852, he reserved to himself the power of taking it away, if it was not for the interest of his government and people; and as it is clear to me that that king left the revision of the constitution to my predecessor and myself; therefore, as I sit in his seat, on the part of the sovereignty of the Hawaiian Islands, I make known to-day that the constitution of 1852 is abrogated. I will give you a constitution." His Majesty requested ministers to remain at present in their respective positions, in order to avoid confusion and disturbance, and he then dissolved the convention.

It was, perhaps, time for the incubation to be over. The convention had been sitting five weeks with no profitable result. The obstinacy of the opposition had defeated itself.

On the 20th of August, a week after the breaking up of the convention, the promised new constitution appeared. It omits the obnoxious axiom about "free and equal," abolishes the office of "kuhina-nui," gives the king a larger place in the State, makes cabinet ministers more responsible, excludes the ballot, prescribes as the minimum qualification of a representative real estate of five hundred dollars' value, and annual income of two hundred and fifty dollars; and of an elector, property of one hundred and fifty dollars, or twenty-five dollars a year rent on leasehold property, and seventy-five dollars yearly income, together with certain intellectual acquirements. It includes a stringent article on royal marriages, and on the succession to the Crown; and, the king being unmarried, it provides for a new *stirps* for a royal family, should the present race become extinct.

Such is the little passage of history which has been in progress during the last few months in Hawaii. It is "distinct," though "distant;" and interesting when we recollect that the English nation also had its childhood.

A Memorial of Thackeray's School-Days.

It may be interesting to those who have known Thackeray only at a distance and from his works, and to not a few of those, also, who had personal intimacy with him in his later life, to hear a little about his earlier. There are, of course, many of his schoolfellow still living who had such general knowledge of him as boys ordinarily have of each other in a large public school; but only two or three survive who were closely intimate with him out of school-hours, and who knew what his tastes and amusements were, and what his character and disposition when off drill. I do not propose to give the present sketch because I can do it well, but because I am almost the only one who can do it at all. The notices that appeared of him at a time when our sorrow for his loss was yet recent touched very slightly upon his school-days, and, in the many and varied judgments of his personal character, the critics have gained very little light from any knowledge of him when that character was in the course of forming. After all, it is only an outer key that I, or any bystander, can put into the reader's hand. The lock of the inner character of even a boy of genius is generally so complex that it cannot be opened from without.

In speaking of the youth of a great man there is, perhaps, some temptation to throw back a little of the light and colour of the later days upon the earlier; in a faithful portrait this must steadily be resisted. It is more allowable to give those traits of the earlier days which best interpret the later, and it is perfectly fair to suggest the interpretation.

It was when he was between the ages of thirteen and fifteen and a half or sixteen that I knew Thackeray best. He was then a rosy-faced boy with dark curling hair, and a quick, intelligent eye, ever twinkling with humour, and *good* humour. He was stout and broad-set, and gave no promise of the stature which he afterwards reached. It was during a short but severe illness, just before he left school, that he grew rapidly, leaving his sick-bed certainly a good many inches taller than he was when he entered it, and heading at once nearly all his contemporaries. No man ever owed more of his mental growth to time and exercise, and less of his bodily stature.

For the usual schoolboy sports and games Thackeray had no taste or passion whatever, any more than in after-life for those field-sports which seem to have been the delight of his schoolfellow and fellow humorist, Leech. Such amusements would have come probably next to Euclid and algebra in his list of dislikes. But he was by no means what a good many men of genius are said to have been in their youth—disposed to isolation or solitary musing. For a non-playing boy he was wonderfully social, full

of vivacity and enjoyment of life. His happy *insouciance* was constant. Never was any lad at once so jovial, so healthy, and so sedentary. Good spirits and merriment seemed to enable him to dispense with the glow of cricket or foot-ball ; and if in his still earlier days he ever "fagged out," it must have been most bitterly against his will. We were now and then, indeed, out together in small fishing parties, but it was for the talking, and the change, and the green fields, and the tea abroad instead of at home—cakes, &c. accompanying (for he was always rather gustative, never greedy)—that Thackeray liked these expeditions.

I question whether he knew the difference between a roach and a gudgeon—except when fried—whether he ever caught either the one or the other I am much disposed to doubt; or whether he cared about doing so. Thus the reader may have seen many a citizen angler on the banks of the Lea, or punted on the Thames, with vast provision of tackle and ground-bait, but whose main felicity, to judge from the tankard and sandwiches by his side, does not depend on anything so capricious as a fish's appetite, but on something far more certain and substantial, videlicet his own.

I have just now lying on the table beside me, in Thackeray's handwriting of some forty years ago,—his writing was always beautiful,—a little programme of *Bombastes Furioso*, enacted by himself and some three or four of his schoolfellows, in which he took the part of Fusbos, and to the best of my recollection, did it very well; but the thing dropped through, and there were no repetitions; the rest had very little dramatic zeal. This was almost the only common amusement in which I ever knew him join, *con amore*. He had a passion for theatricals, of course kept under restraint at school, but now and then gratified when he visited friends in London, on the half-holidays.

There was also a little speaking club in which he would sometimes take part merely out of good nature, for he hated speaking then, and I do not believe he liked it much better afterwards.

He was eminently good-tempered to all, especially the younger boys, and nothing of a tyrant or bully. Instead of a blow or a threat, I can just hear him saying to one of them, "Hooky" (a sobriquet of a son of the late Bishop Carr, of Bombay), "go up and fetch me a volume of *Ivanhoe* out of my drawer, that's a good fellow; in the same drawer you will, perhaps, find a penny, which you may take for yourself." The penny was, indeed, rather problematical, but still realized sufficiently often to produce excitement in the mind of the youth thus addressed, and to make the service a willing one. When disappointed, it was more than probable that the victim would call Thackeray a "great snob" for misleading him, a title for which the only vengeance would be a humorous and benignant smile. In the two or three years that I am recording, I scarcely ever saw Thackeray seriously angry, or even his brow wrinkled with a frown. He has been called a cynic; it is doubtful whether a real cynic could ever be manufactured out of a boy who had such powers as he had of sarcasm,

and who used them so little unkindly. Nor is it to be believed, by those who knew him well, that, though in after-life he had his eruptions of wrath, and moments of severity, after he had undergone the tremendously searching hot and cold ordeal of great trials and great triumphs, his nature was radically changed.

Thackeray had nearly all the materials that usually go to the making of a first-rate classical scholar. He had wonderful memory, an absolute faculty of imitation, which might have been employed in following the great classic models of verse and prose; he had the power of acquiring language; and, it is needless to say, an intense admiration of the beautiful. He got to love his Horace, and was, no doubt, *actually* a better scholar than many of our first-rate writers of English; but he was not, and never pretended to be, a high classical scholar. I speak of the fact; none but a pedant would think of detracting from him on that ground: we have five hundred, five thousand high classical scholars, without getting a Thackeray out of them. "Son esprit était à libre allure," as Lamartine says of one of his school friends. He had no school industry. One would be sorry to let any schoolboy read the long list of great literary men of whom the same might be said. Probably, too, as a younger boy he had been ill-grounded, and so lost confidence when he came to cope with those who had been better initiated, and gave up the race in which he thought he might fail, for he had plenty of pride and ambition. Not one of us would have given him credit for that "stalk of earl hemp" with which he met subsequent misfortunes and difficulties, and that firm and noble perseverance with which he worked his way gradually upwards, when the cheers of encouragement were comparatively faint and few. No one could in those early days have believed that there was much work in him, or that he would ever get to the top of any tree by hard climbing.

Thackeray, then, experienced the usual amount of nausea, and perhaps of difficulty, in making verses and translations, and was, at fourteen, more thankful, perhaps, than most boys are for a helping hand. I see now, on the back of one of his drawings, on the same sheet with a portion of an old exercise, this acknowledgment in intentional doggerel—

These verses were written by William Ewbank,
And him for his kindness I very much thank.

His exercise was, indeed, constantly left to the very last moment, whilst he was busy with a burlesque sketch of its subject, or deeply engaged in a volume of Shakspeare, Scott, or Southey, from whom he took his real lessons, not from Chapman or Churton.

Burke, when speaking of the American colonies, praises "the wise and salutary neglect by which a generous nature is allowed to take its own way to perfection." Doubtless the neglect of the rich ore of Thackeray's talents was not deliberate on the part of his masters, but it served the purpose as well as if it had been. In the wholesale ways and large classes

of a multitudinous public school, as Charterhouse then was, many of the gifted pass without recognition of their gifts, if they do not appear to be of the kind specially in demand. In some cases this is a pity; but it may be doubted whether even the anxious and perpetual superintendence of a careful and clever private tutor, appreciating and trying to make the most of his material, would have been so useful to Thackeray as were his freedom and self-chosen course. Had his scholarship been perfected like that of a Canning or a Frere, early scholastic distinction might have tempted him to the regular practice of a profession other than that of a man of letters, with its struggles, experiments, and varied contact with men. Perhaps he never would have submitted to professional trammels; had he done so, the sparkles of such a wit could not have been hid, but they would probably have passed off in *jeux d'esprit*, or those lighter efforts for which alone there is generally room where original genius submits to the burdens of successful professional toil. At any rate, we should have been far less likely to have had our great novelist.

Though keenly ambitious, and very sensitive of failure, Thackeray was wonderfully free from anything like vanity or conceit. He had small confidence in his own powers, and was naturally inclined to rate himself below his mark. The better scholarship of many of his contemporaries may have had something to do with this. However, this want of confidence showed itself in many ways afterwards, and even at a time when his genius and his fame were at their full growth. For example, he was, even to the last, sensitive of blame to a degree scarcely ever found in men satisfied of their own powers. Like other great but inwardly modest men, his first impulse was to overrate rather than underrate the ability of others, and he readily accorded the "clever fellow," uttered in perfect sincerity, though, when he came to a thorough examination of their performances, he was keen critic enough. Not many years ago, he complained to me, with most earnest sincerity, of the poorness of his memory, when every book that he wrote was giving fresh proof of its retentiveness, and the readiness with which it recalled everything that he had read or seen—a faculty that gave him a power of varied allusion *without cram*, in which he seems to have only one rival among the writers of fiction of the present day. To his friends he talked freely of the difficulties he experienced in writing. His own final great and deserved success, he never anticipated. Some years before the publication of *Vanity Fair*, he told me, whilst passing a day with me in the country, that he had a novel in his desk which, if published, would sell, he thought, to about seven hundred copies. Could this have been *Vanity Fair*? I rather think it must have been.

I dwell the more upon this point, because it appears to me to be a key to a certain characteristic of his writing, the constant introduction of the "*non tanti est*" both as regards things in general, and his own lucubrations upon them. His first sobriquet of "Michael Angelo Titmarsh" had a great deal of meaning for those who knew him well. His beau-ideal was

serious and sublime; he was too familiar with, too much a master of, the humorous, to think as much about that mastery as his admirers did. I have heard him speak in terms of homage to the genius of Keats which he would not have vouchsafed to the whole tribe of humorists. But when he himself launched out of the playful into the serious, how often do we find him half "mocking himself and scorning his spirit," not for "smiling," but for the contrary. He seems to shrink from the idea of incurring the satire conveyed in these lines of Churchill:

When humour was thy province, for some crime
Pride struck thee with the frenzy of sublime.

And he descends quickly again to the humorous, where he fancied himself, though perhaps he was not, more at home.

Let me be pardoned for this excursion, if I have struck upon a key which has been missed in the general criticisms on Thackeray, by those who knew little or nothing of his early character.



Men are reluctant enough—boys perhaps even more than men—to allow more than one forte to the same individual; all would have accorded two to Thackeray. First and foremost, his power of drawing, especially caricature; it was probably the high esteem in which this was held by his friends and schoolfellows, that led him afterwards to think of the pencil as a resource before the pen. Leech, at Charterhouse, was too much his junior to cope with him, and so he was *facile princeps* in drawing of an

amusing kind: indeed very much of his time was taken up with it. I have now in my possession a great number of his sketches and drawings, long carefully stored in affectionate remembrance of those early days, when I little suspected the fame of the draughtsman. It is from these that the illustrations which give its principal value to this little memorial are taken. It seems to me sometimes, as I look them over, that his power of drawing fell rather back as he advanced in authorship; at least, in his early drawings the types were much more varied, indeed they seemed scarcely to have any limit. On the preceding page are two examples; another will be found on the last page: they are copied with the closest accuracy.

From Homer, from Horace, from Scott's poems, from Cooper's novels, from any author he happened to have in hand, he found subject for fantastic and humorous illustrations; whilst we looked on, wondering at the quickness of his brain and fingers.



Old King Cole

Thackeray was decidedly musical as a boy, and had a capital ear; but just as he disliked formal speaking, so it was his nature to shrink from

the small amount of personal display involved in singing a song—*i. e.* after the age of self-consciousness. In short, he was highly nervous in all

such matters, and could never, I think, in his earlier years, be made anything of as a small “show-child of genius.” However, if a schoolfellow hummed or whistled the air of one of his favourite songs, it would often set him embodying its subject in the manner shown on this and the preceding page.

Is there not something of kindred between this power and passion for burlesque, and that “*non tanti est*” feeling referred to above, and also that particular turn of thought

which has been called cynicism in his writings, as I venture to think, untruly? There was no bitterness in him, and genial good-nature prevented his satire from any sharp biting of individuals. No one was ever freer from what old Johnson tersely calls “a diligent cultivation of the power of dislike.” In after-life he was one of the right kind of satirists; not of the family of Diogenes, who went about with a lanthorn in search of an honest man, whom he would have been vastly disappointed to have found, but rather akin to Talus of the *Faerie Queen*, who, for the sake of justice and humanity, lays about him with his flail at all kinds of rascality. His onslaughts were, to use the words of a great artist and satirist before him,—

Figlie d'umanità più che di sdegno.*

Our greatest satirists, whether in prose or verse, with one or two exceptions, have not been bad or unkind men, but the contrary.

There are very few, I believe, who have acted more faithfully up to what they thought and wrote than Thackeray did. Instances of the contrary in great writers are endless. I will take one: Goldsmith's Essays are an epitome of keen observation, sound common sense, and

* Perhaps Salvator Rosa might more properly have called his satires “Children of Humanity and of Indignation.” When Thackeray chose to smile at human faults and follies, it was not from any want of earnest feeling, for his nature was affectionate, and his sense of the “just and unjust” most keen. Strangers have interpreted his character from his writings; friends, his writings from his character: the latter have done him the most justice. He had attributes that never belonged to any “cynic.” First and foremost, he delighted in the happiness of others, was quite an apostle of early marriage, and sympathized in its joys and trials. “Il jouissait dans le cœur des autres.” He gave his warm approbation to those only of our great writers who were really worthy as men, and had an evident contempt for authors of the true cynical character, as, in their several ways, Swift and Sterne.



“Strike Strike the light Guitar”

worldly wisdom ; his life was full of imprudences and weakness. Though sadly swindled in early life, from too much generous confidence, Thackeray had great practical common sense ; nor was the following up of the word by the deed easy in his case, for his conceptions of the just and the generous were of heroic compass. One consequence, however, of this was, that every "break-down" of human nature striving after good, contributed rather to feed that *vive la bagatelle* feeling, to which other peculiarities of his mind also tended, as I have endeavoured to show elsewhere.

Thackeray had an intense dislike for anything like meanness, shabbiness, pretentiousness, or tyranny, and a very quick eye for discovering them ; he had, too, just a smack of social pride, which led him afterwards, in his *Snob Papers*, to deal rather hard measure not merely to snobs in heart and feeling, but to sheer imbecility, foolish dressing, and helpless ignorance of conventional manners and good breeding. This, however, be it observed, never prevented him in his days of prosperity from holding out the hand of aid and fellowship to men his inferiors in what is usually called social position. Let me add that it was his high gentlemanlike feeling which, in spite of great natural love of ease, saved him from that lapse into a state of dependence into which a vast number of men of genius have been content to fall, which made him trust to himself, whilst he aided others, and wrestle with the dark angel of adversity till she brightened and blessed him.

A kindred accomplishment to that of caricaturing was his art of parody, afterwards brought to a climax in his imitations of eminent novelists. This, however, he practised rarely, comparatively speaking. I subjoin what I believe to have been about his earliest essay in this line; it has never, I think, been in print. He must have been about fourteen when it was written. The parody I copy from memory ; for the original I have been obliged to refer to poor L. E. L.'s poems, who in those days wrote in the *Literary Gazette*, where I fancy Thackeray caught sight of the lines, and thought them over-sentimental.

VOLETS.

Violets ! deep blue violets !
April's loveliest coronets :
There are no flowers grow in the vale,
Kissed by the sun, wo'd by the gale,
None with the dew of the twilight wet,
So sweet as the deep blue violet.

I do remember how sweet a breath
Came with the azure light of a wreath,
That hung round the wild harp's golden chords
That rung to my dark-eyed lover's words ;
I have seen that dear harp rolled
With gems of the East and bands of gold,
But it never was sweeter than when set
With leaves of the dark blue violet.

And when the grave shall open for me—
I care not how soon that time may be—
Never a rose shall blow on my tomb,
It breathes too much of hope and bloom ;
But let me have there the meek regret
Of the bending and deep blue violet,

CABBAGES.

Cabbages ! bright green cabbages !
April's loveliest gifts, I guess,
There is not a plant in the garden laid,
Raised by the dung, dug by the spade,
None by the gardener watered, I ween,
So sweet as the cabbage, the cabbage green.

I do remember how sweet a smell
Came with the cabbage I loved so well,
Served up with the beef that beautiful looked,
The beef that the dark-eyed Ellen cooked.
I have seen beef served with radish of horse,
I have seen beef served with lettuce of Cos,
But it is far nicer, far nicer, I guess,
As bubble and squeak, beef and cabbages.

And when the dinner-bell sounds for me—
I care not how soon that time may be—
Carrots shall never be served on my cloth ;
They are far too sweet for a boy of my broth ;
But let me have there a mighty mess
Of smoking hot beef and cabbages.

If the reader can bring to his own mind an instance of biography in which the school-boy *bon-mots* of a great man have been carefully recorded, he may blame me for not making here a record of Thackeray's. They have passed away with the hours which they enlivened, and the laughter, or more often the smiles, that they raised. He was, as may easily be believed, our great humorist, and touched most of our weak points good-naturedly and without offence. Nothing in character escaped him.*

He was not, I think, in those days an inventor of stories ; certainly I never knew him try his hand at a plot ; this power was gained afterwards, and gradually, as must be very evident to those who have followed his works in their series. He was an omnivorous reader, that is, of good English books ; a trashy volume he would have thrown down in five minutes. His taste selected good books, and so his style was in a continual course of formation on good models. Memoirs, moralists like Addison and Goldsmith, and fiction and poetry from the best hands, were his favourites ; but in those days he never worked in earnest at anything serious in the way of composition, or put his power to the stretch in any way.

We took in the Magazines—*Blackwood*, the *New Monthly*, the *London*, and the *Literary Gazette*—then in nearly their first glory, and full of excellent articles. I do not know who first suggested this, or whether it was a common thing for the senior boys at the public schools to club together for any such purpose ; probably not, from the incuriosity about such reading that generally prevailed at one at least of the universities. I am sure there was very little indeed of any such leaven in the mingled mass of undergraduates of my own college. It was a positive intellectual descent from the school set to which Thackeray belonged to the ordinary college level, and a very considerable one. With the exception of a small group here and there, a knowledge of and interest in the better kinds of contemporary literature was very rare indeed at the colleges.

It is uncertain what college tutors or schoolmasters may think of Magazine reading for their pupils ; to the set of whom I am now speaking my belief is that it was most advantageous, and that it proved to be a very strong stimulus of literary curiosity and ambition. The constantly fresh monthly or weekly supply of short articles seemed to bring home the fact of literary production, and made it appear, in some degree, within reach. This was the real commencement of Thackeray's connection with the Magazines, which he used to read with the greatest eagerness, little inter-

* As minor, but not insignificant notes of character, it may be added that Thackeray always dressed plainly but well, and had no turn to foppery. To those who had the charge of him he was kindly, gentlemanlike, and reasonable, having, in spite of all his high spirits, no kind of youthful *viscœ*, either to juniors or seniors. Partly by kind temper, and also by an acute sense of the ridiculous in conduct, he was saved from a good many of the absurdities which, in big boys, amuse or annoy, as the case may be,

fered with by any school responsibilities. No doubt he often then thought what a pleasant thing it would be to be one of the guild, and first felt that "indrawing into the sea" of letters, which he afterwards obeyed. This kind of reading, too, led to much youthful criticism of the topics and merits of the "periodical" men of the day; the *Quarterly* and *Edinburgh* only being rather too high and dry for us.

"Uva uvam spectans maturescit;"—grape ripens grape, and the finest are by no means the first ripe. If this life were the "be all and end all," we might sometimes fancy that many good and clever men have been brought into the world chiefly for the maturation of others. Thackeray was by no means unindebted to the boys amongst whom he happened to be thrown, for those of his own age and a little older were of high promise, and could fully understand him and sympathize with him. What havoc has time made in that party, always a small one!

Ewbank, who was one of the oldest, and, in the school sense, one of the best Charterhouse men, and a medallist, when Charterhouse was one of our largest public schools, has long slept in a grave amongst the rocks of Sinai. He was a true scholar, and more than that, a man of worth, genius, and taste, by no means limited to *Æschylus* and *Tacitus*, but equally well up in Shakspeare and Milton; his classical and English scholarship twined gracefully together: he was one of Thackeray's ripeners.

Carne was nearer Thackeray's age, and a good English verse writer, rather in Praed's manner. He could recite Walter Scott, Southey, and Pope's *Homer* without limit; could give and take well in a contest of wit, and was a capital speaker. He was said to have been afterwards the best of the Cambridge Union in his day—a sadly short one: he died of decline at Madeira, I believe before he had taken his degree.

Stoddart, who was, perhaps, Thackeray's greatest favourite of all, afterwards fellow and tutor of St. John's College, Oxford, lies in the English cemetery at Genoa; one of the most noble-hearted men I ever knew, and one of the faithfulest friends: as such he was cherished to the last by Thackeray. He brought from home anecdotes of the men in whom we were interested—of Scott, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Lamb, and Hazlitt, with all of whom his father, Sir John Stoddart, was closely intimate. How well I remember his bringing in the first series of Hood's *Whims and Oddities*, then a new book, and how we all crowded round him! He was well read and quiet, and had an infinite relish for Thackeray's humour.

Gardiner too, afterwards M.P. for Leicester, was one of us: he was rather a junior, a very clever fellow, and one who entertained a great reverence for Thackeray. He faced the House of Commons boldly enough when a very young man, but has confessed to me that he never could get over his awe of Thackeray's power of sarcasm, though he had never been seriously hurt by it. He, too, is gone, and like poor Stoddart, preceded Thackeray.

Then there was another junior, my old and most valued friend Poynder, now the second master of Charterhouse.

James Young, too, survives, of ready wit, kind, good-natured and light-hearted, far fitter than I am to give a sketch of those days; but he has, perhaps, already thrown his stone on the cairn of his old school-fellow.

A few other names might be added, were it not for fear of exhausting the reader's patience. However, of those who survive, if any should cast their eyes over this sketch, they must acknowledge the substantial truth of it, whatever they may think of the few inferences I have ventured to draw from facts which they must recognize. According the highest honour to the character and genius of my old friend, I do not allow myself to dilate on that ample theme, but close here my record of what he was as a school-boy.

J. F. B.



